

# THE ACT REPORT

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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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# Table Games OK'ed in Wheeling, But Rejected in Charles Town

**I**n votes held in two counties on June 9 voters approved and rejected a measure to allow Table Games at existing racetracks.

Voters approved Table Games in Ohio County by almost 2 to 1.

But the Jefferson County vote failed by 56 percent to 44 percent.

The results mean the Ohio County track, Wheeling Island Racetrack & Gaming Center, will be able to begin expansion plans immediately.

More than \$40 million in con-

struction projects are planned for the Wheeling Island Racetrack & Gaming Center facility.

Work for a poker room is already underway and plans for a table game area, a new hotel, and a 1000 seat arena are being discussed.

"We are excited by the outcome," said John Clarke, Business Representative of Electricians Local 141 in Wheeling and Chairman of the local effort to support the vote called the "Jobs for Ohio County Committee."

According to Clarke members of the Building Trades along with Project Best and the Chamber of Commerce all

pulled together to get information to the public about the importance of the Table Games vote.

"It just proves that, given the true facts, intelligent people make intelligent decisions," said Clarke.

Both tracks had made commitments to use local union construction workers for their projects.

Representatives from Penn National, the parent company of Charles Town Races and Slots agreed to work the first phase of their proposed expansion under a project labor agreement with the North Central WV

Building Trades.

However, the commitment from Charles Town came late in the campaign, which limited the involvement of local union workers in the effort.

"Once we had an agreement we contacted our members, and the leaders and members of other unions in the area urging their support," said Larry Young, ACT Representative.

Citizen concern about traffic and too much growth appear to have led to the vote against the measure.

Jefferson County voters will have to wait two years before

*Continued on p. 2*

# Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades Participate in Job Fair

**M**ore than 20 companies and ten building trades apprenticeship programs put on an all day career fair in Marietta on June 8.

Approximately 1000 people attended the event that was considered a huge success by all who participated.

"The interest was fantastic," said Sam Davis, Business Manager for the Parkersburg-Marietta Building Trades and one of the event organizers.

"The need for skilled manpower is a big issue in our area."

The career fair was put together by the Mid-Ohio Valley Maintenance Council and focused on industrial maintenance and skilled trades.

Local companies, such as DuPont, AEP, and GE Plastics were in attendance. And most of the Building Trades apprenticeship programs had booths and

provide training specific to a site, but there is a real need for workers who have a skill."

The event has been planned over the last few months and is part of an area strategy to ad-

dress manpower needs.

Some people who were looking for work found good leads. Others who were looking for training opportunities had plenty to consider.

People were able to stop by, ask questions and learn about programs and companies.



**BOB SUPE, (seated) Organizer with Sprinkler Fitters 669, talks with an interested attendee at the Marietta Jobs Fair. Standing behind Supe is Dave Ford (left), Business Agent for 669 who is talking with Fuzz LaRue of the ACT Foundation. "In my ten years as agent that was the best Jobs Fair I have ever been involved in," said Ford.**

**PRESIDENT OF MARSHALL UNIVERSITY****Guest Column by Stephen J. Kopp****The Robert C Byrd Biotechnology Science Center stands as a vanguard to the future of Marshall University and the Tri-State region.**

This edifice is a testament to the power of the partnership between the



University Administration, the Board of Governors of Marshall University and the Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Council.

This magnificent facility showcases the remarkable craftsmanship and meticulous attention to detail by the many union workers responsible for its construction.

No one can predict when the next breakthrough scientific discovery benefiting humankind will be made or who will make it, but it is a virtual certainty that discoveries of this nature will happen within the walls of this building.

When they do, every worker

who contributed to the creation of this building can take pride in knowing that they were a part of that breakthrough.

Each member of the Tri-State Building Trades who worked on this project has helped shape the future, an incredible future of opportunity for Marshall University and our region.

During the coming weeks, a new and even larger construction project will begin that will redefine the campus environment of Marshall University.

Mr. Steve Burton and the leaders of each building craft have been very influential in providing the necessary support and advocacy for this major project since its inception last fall, and throughout the difficult processes required to move it forward.

Beginning in June, and in partnership with the Tri-State Building Trades and Capstone Development Corporation, Marshall University will embark on the construction of a new, 120,000 square foot Student Recreation Center and two new, Living/Learning Residence Halls.

These modern facilities will help advance enrollment growth and further distinguish Marshall University as a distinctive residential campus viewed by future

students as their college destination.

The total investment in this project is estimated at \$92 million, which is twice that of the Robert C. Byrd Biotechnology Science Center.

The contractor for this new project is Mascaro Construction. They will operate under a labor management agreement with Tri-State Building Trades.

Over 99% of the project work will be performed by union

workers and the Tri-State Building Trades.

At Marshall University we know the power and importance of bold, action-oriented leadership that gets the job done and done well.

This attitude is embraced by the Tri-State Building Trades and personified in its leadership.

Together, we will do what is right, what is hard and what is necessary to help lead our community and State to a better fu-

ture.

None of us can do it alone but together we are a powerful force for change and the betterment of all concerned.

Lastly, thank you to all of the members of the Tri-State Building Trades who attended the Cabell County Commission meeting on May 3, 2007.

Your presence was a compelling, visible testimony to our solidarity and commitment to this project and our future.



**STEVE BURTON SPEAKS** in support of bonds for Marshall University at a Cabell County Commission meeting. The Commission approved the measure during a May 3 meeting that was well attended by members of the Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Council.

**Table Games**

*CONTINUED FROM P. 1*

another vote can be held.

Two more counties have votes scheduled on the issue.

Hancock County will vote on June 30 and Kanawha County on August 11.

All four counties had planned to vote on June 9 but because a public notice requirement was missed in Hancock and Kanawha the votes were rescheduled.

All together well over \$500 million in new construction projects had been talked about if voters in all four counties approve the projects.

“The local Building Trades Councils have a good working relationship with the tracks in Hancock and Kanawha County so we will be working hard to let our folks in those counties know about the good union construction jobs that will be created if the vote passes” said Roy Smith, Secretary Treasurer of the

WV State Building Trades Council.

Proponents of Table Games were able to get legislative approval for the new amenities in part because they pointed to recent legislation in Pennsylvania allowing slot machines at racing facilities.

The competition from Pennsylvania, and talk about the same from Maryland are seen as potentially harmful to West Virginia gaming operations and the jobs and tax revenue they bring.

**Last month, with support from the Tri-State Building Trades, the Cabell County Commission agreed to be the issuer of \$125 million in bonds for Marshall University. The action will allow a favorable tax rate and lower bond costs for Marshall, who will be responsible for the bond payments.**

**That action and the positive relationship between the Trades and Marshall led to the guest commentary above by Marshall President Stephen J. Kopp, Ph.D.**

# Right-to-Work...for Less

**R**ecently the **Charleston Daily Mail** featured an article in which **WVU economics professor Russell Sobel** came out in favor of so-called "right-to-work" legislation for West Virginia.

The term "right-to-work" is misleading. It has nothing to do with the right to employment, and, as I'll show in detail below, it can more accurately be called "right-to-work-for-less."

Basically, in free labor states, if the majority of workers vote to join a union, all workers belong to the union. It's not that different from any other kind of election. To use some common examples, if the majority of city residents elect a mayor or pass an ordinance, the mayor is the mayor of the city and the ordi-

nance goes into effect.

In right-to-work-for-less states, workers are not obliged to pay union dues even if the majority of workers votes for union representation, although they reap all the benefits of union membership and the union has an obligation to represent them.

And just what are the benefits of union membership? According to the 2006/2007 *State of Working America*, published by the Economic Policy Institute, the union premium or degree to which union wages and benefits exceed nonunion wages and benefits is high. Union workers earn 28.1% more in wages than nonunion workers. If you look at total compensation, the union premium is 43.7%.

Union workers are 28.2% more likely to have employer provided health insurance, usually with lower deductibles and premiums. Over 70% of union

workers have pensions, compared with 43.8% of nonunion workers. Union members enjoy more paid time off work for vacations (14.3% more) than nonunion workers.

These are the kinds of jobs and benefits that make it possible to raise and care for a family. These kinds of jobs have promoted the growth of the middle class, stimulated the economy, and formed the basis of a shared prosperity. In addition, there is a spillover effect which benefits nonunion members. This is because union compensation packages encourage other employers to offer competitive benefits.

According to Sobel, "Economic research suggests states with right-to-work laws tend to do better."

This may well be true in some alternate universe, but it isn't the case in this one.

Data from the US Census

A number of West Virginia newspapers recently have promoted an effort to bring back anti-union right-to-work legislation in part because of a new book by a WVU economist. The following is a well documented response from Rick Wilson, of the West Virginia Economic Justice Project. [www.goatrobe.blogspot.com](http://www.goatrobe.blogspot.com)

Bureau shows quite the opposite. Free labor states outperform right-to-work-for-less states and the results aren't even close. I looked at three year averages of median income by state between 2002 and 2004.

And here are some findings:

\*Median US income: \$44,473.

\*Average for free labor states: \$47,016.

\*Average for right-to-work-for-less states: \$41,463.

In other words, average median income for the 22 right-to-work-for-less states was \$3,010 less than the US median and fully \$5,553 less than that of free labor states. So when I call it right-to-work-for-less, I'm not trying to be funny. I'm just stating the facts.

But there's more. If you place

the states in order by income, only one right-to-work-for-less state is among the top ten high income states (Virginia at #7). And only four (Virginia, Utah, Nevada, and Nebraska) were among the top 25 states.

In fact, 18 of 22 right-to-work-for-less states—more than 80%—were in the bottom half of states in median income.

That's some cure-all. Looking at those numbers, I'd say prescribing right-to-work-for-less for WV is kind of like prescribing cigarettes for distance runners and cardiac patients.

Whatever the real reasons are for West Virginia's low incomes—which probably have to do with a colonial economy and deindustrialization—our status as a free labor state has nothing to do with it.

## UA 625 Apprentices Help Out



**APPRENTICES FROM PLUMBERS and Pipefitters Local 625 Charleston recently undertook a project that not only helped them learn, but helped their community as well.**

**With supplies donated by Ferguson Enterprises the group helped renovate a bathroom for a local cancer patient.**

**(From left front) Larry Clark Jr., Michael Johnson, Joey Casto, (back) Bryan Jarvis, Instructor Terry Snodgrass, Apprentice Coordinator Brett Matthews, and Allan Hall.**

**(Not pictured Bryan Bragg, Joshua Engle, Derek Jones, Chris Shannon, Lloyd Smith).**

## Voter Appreciation Day



**DELEGATE DAN POLING (D-Wood) talks with Evelyn Greenburg during Wood County Voter Appreciation Day. The event was held at the Parkersburg City Park on June 10. 500 people attended. Poling, who is also a Business Agent for Painters DC 53, planned the event with House Majority Leader Joe DeLong (D-Hancock) to let voters meet the new House Leadership and current elected officials from Wood County.**

**Also in attendance was House Speaker Rick Thompson (D-Wayne), Majority Leader DeLong and Majority Whip Mike Caputo (D-Marion). "It was a great day and I really appreciate the folks who came out and those who helped put the event together," said Poling.**

## LARGEST INVESTMENT IN WEST VIRGINIA HISTORY

# \$1.8 Billion Union Project Finally Underway

**The long-awaited groundbreaking ceremony for the Longview Power plant project was held on May 30 at the Monongalia County construction site.**

The event marked the official beginning of the 695 megawatt coal-fired electric generating facility, although construction actually began in March, when around 30 workers began preparation of a site expected to cover 200 acres.

An audience of 250 heard speakers representing union construction workers, Longview executives, business representatives and government, including West Virginia Governor Joe Manchin.

The speakers touted the sheer size of the project which at \$1.8 billion represents the single largest private investment in the his-

tory of West Virginia. Longview Power management estimates peak construction employment of 1500.

The project has been six years in the making beginning with the original application to the Public Service Commission, continuing through over 30 public hearings to the point where financing for the massive project was announced.

At times, the milestones passed in rapid succession.

For example, a report of the March 3, 2004 approval of the projects air permit by the WV Department of Environmental Protection appeared next to an announcement of a five hour public hearing scheduled that same month on March 31, 2004.

The March 31 hearing demonstrated the effectiveness of a coordinated effort by the building trades as over 200 union members turned out to express their support.

Dynamic vocal support became a hallmark of union construction workers excited about the opportunity to build the state-of-the-art plant.

Natalie Stone, Executive Secretary of the North Central West Virginia Building Trades, said each phase of Longview's development represented a milestone in a project she first believed was "too good to be true."

"Right from the start, we saw the potential opportunity for our membership," said Stone reflecting to when she first heard of the project.

"The numbers were almost too big to take in, but once we caught our breath, we got down to work. We had to make it happen."

Stone said that if she had to pick a turning point when she was confident Longview would become a reality, it would be either the PSC approval or the an-

nouncement that Goldman Sachs, an international investment firm, would provide the necessary financial backing.

"The PSC announcement established the project as viable on a regulatory level, while the financing made it a reality," explained Stone.

Stone added the challenge to

work scheduled for the Ft. Martin power plant just down the road, we will have at least 2500 members working full time for years," said Stone.

In addition to the obvious benefits of high quality construction employment, project supporters cite additional positives such as the \$5 million received

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**MEMBERS OF THE North Central WV Building Trades and Governor Joe Manchin help turn the first shovels of dirt at the Longview job site. (From Left) Ken Downie, Ray Parr, Natalie Stone, Governor Manchin, Mark Estlack, Tom Halfin, Jason Hershman, Larry Lilley, Ed Boone, Dave Ford, and Darwin Snyder (also attending Steve Perdue and Joe Trentini).**

provide trained, skilled craftspeople to Longview and other area projects has just begun.

Aker-Kvaerner Songer will be the general contractor for the project.

Siemens Power Generation, Inc. and Foster Wheeler North America will also have a role in the engineering and boiler supply.

"Between Longview and the

by Monongalia County as their first payment towards their 30-year commitment to pay \$105 million in property taxes.

Monongalia County will spend the money on much needed school projects.

The power plant construction is expected to be completed by 2011, at which 50 to 60 will be employed to operate the facility which will burn coal from a local mine.

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