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A Division of the WV State Building Trades, AFL-CIO | Brad Winans, President | John Epperly, Secretary-Treasurer | Justin Williams, Director

WV PSC Approves Wind Project in Grant, Tucker Co.

The West Virginia Public Service Commission (PSC) has granted Clearway Energy Group's request to update the siting certificate previously granted for the construction of the Catamount Wind project in Grant and Tucker counties.

Catamount Wind represents a \$400 million investment in the region. The project will pay approximately \$900,000 in property taxes during its first year of operation and over \$30 million during the project's lifetime, helping fund school districts, emergency services, and other local services.

Catamount Wind will repurpose unused former mine lands to generate low-cost, reliable, local energy at a time when the region greatly needs additional energy generation. The project will contribute 167 MW of generating capacity to the regional power grid, generating enough energy to power 74,000 West Virginia homes each year. It is in a remote area near existing power lines, coal infrastructure, power plants, and railroads south of Bayard, West Virginia,

on Dobbin and Cherry Ridges.

Construction of the project is anticipated to create 175 local union labor construction jobs, thanks to a partnership with the WV Building

and Construction Trades.

"Building trades are proud to be part of all of the above energy production in West Virginia," said Justin Williams, Director of the Affiliated

Construction Trades of West Virginia. "Construction projects like this create great jobs for our construction professionals and our commu-

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A flyer circulated to the public and stakeholders, encouraging comments in support of the Catamount Wind Farm project in Grant and Tucker Counties. The West Virginia Public Service Commission approved permits for the project earlier this month.

U.S. District Court Judge Requires Dept. of Defense to Continue Use of PLAs

A U.S. District Court judge in Washington, D.C. has granted a preliminary injunction against the U.S. Department of Defense, and U.S. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, for not following a Biden-era executive order mandating the use of project

labor agreements (PLAs) on some federal jobs.

Judge Rudolph Contreras ruled in favor of North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) and the Baltimore-D.C. Metro Building and Construction Trades Council

on May 16, ordering the DOD to set aside PLA-avoidant guidance, even for projects not related to the plaintiffs.

The case is the latest news in a legal back and forth wherein an executive order from former President

Joe Biden remains in place, despite opposition from the current administration and numerous contractor groups.

On Feb. 7, the DOD ordered its contracting officers to halt the us-

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Trades Create Budget to Help Promote WV Craft Apprenticeship Programs

Earlier this year, the West Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council approved a measure which creates a budget to be spent on recruitment initiatives across the state of West Virginia.

Part of this budget is being spent on a series of videos, which feature members of each construction craft, to give a well-rounded view of West Virginia Building and Construction Trades crafts.

The crafts featured in the videos will include: Boilermakers, Bricklayers, Carpenters, Cement Mason, Electricians, Insulators, Iron Workers, Laborers, Millwrights, Operating

Engineers, Industrial Painters, Pipe Fitters, Roofers, and Sheet Metal Workers.

Representatives from the West Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council say this initiative is aimed at helping build up craft apprenticeship programs to address the need for labor in West Virginia's construction industry.

"We have always prided ourselves in being able to step up to the plate when contractors and developers have a need in our jurisdictions," said John Epperly, Secretary-Treasurer for the West Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council.

"These videos are just one aspect of how we are trying to meet folks where they are to encourage them to explore taking on a career in the trades. The plan is to visit each craft to give folks an idea of what our affiliates do in each of their programs."

With new challenges and technology on the horizon, Epperly says the

trades plan to build on this new initiative going forward.

"Contractors approach us all the time, asking for additional skilled workers," said Epperly. "Because of this, we are directing significant resources to ensure that we can always be ready, regardless of what their needs are," said Epperly. ■



Insulators Local 80 apprentice Cameron Bennett is interviewed for a construction trades recruitment video. The video is part of an ongoing initiative by the Affiliated Construction Trades (ACTWV) and the WV Building and Construction Trades Council (WVBCT) to strengthen the pipeline of skilled labor to the construction industry by actively recruiting for union craft apprenticeship programs.

Tri-State Trades Hold DADs Day Event



Members of the Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Council gather for lunch at their 30th Annual DAD's Day Golf Tournament.

DAD's Day, short for Dollars Against Diabetes Day, has been a long running effort by the North American Building Trades Unions in the United States and Canada to support research for a cure to diabetes.

Over the years, the trades have raised more than \$75 million for the Diabetes Research Institute, located at the University of Miami.

However, the Tri-State Building and Construction Trades have raised more than \$300,000 personally over the course of their 30 years holding the annual event.

"We thank all those who sponsored and participated in the event from both Labor and Management," said Holbrook. "I also want to thank all the volunteers who helped put this event together. Everyone's time and effort truly help to make a difference for those with diabetes."

WV PSC Approves

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nities. This project is a win for West Virginia and a win for West Virginia workers."

Clearway will establish a community benefit fund for Catamount Wind, modeling its successful community programs at its Mount Storm, Pinnacle, and Black Rock wind plants in Grant and Mineral counties.

The fund will inject \$1 million into local communities throughout the life of the project, supporting community health and recreation,

education, first responders, and workforce development.

Clearway's charitable giving program in West Virginia has contributed over \$710,000 in locally driven donations to date.

Catamount Wind and the repower of Mount Storm Wind will mark a Clearway investment of \$1.2 billion in new energy development.

Construction of the Catamount Wind project is anticipated to be completed in 2027. ■

U.S. Judge Freezes Closure Temporarily **Charleston Job Corps at Risk of Closure Due to New U.S. Department of Labor Order**

On May 29, the U.S. Department of Labor announced it will begin a phased pause in operations at contractor-operated Job Corps centers nationwide, closing all centers by June 30.

However, a U.S. federal judge in Manhattan extended a temporary freeze on June 20, which prevents the US DOL from closing the program, at least for the time being.

The Job Corps is the nation's largest residential job training program for young adults ages 16-24.

The program offers job experience across a variety of industries along with housing and other supports to vulnerable young people.

Studies have shown that participation in Job Corps increases many participants' lifelong earnings and employment rates.

The program's closure would have

an immediate impact on the training of thousands of young adults across the country, including those at the center in Charleston, West Virginia.

At the Charleston Job Corps Center, among the many programs offered are Pre-Apprenticeships in Carpentry and Industrial Painting, which are recognized by the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America and the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades, respectively.

Students training in the Carpentry Pre-Apprentice training program can earn a pre-apprentice certificate of completion from the United Brotherhood of Carpenters (UBC) that offers registered apprenticeship opportunities with paid on-the-job experience.

Students in the Carpentry Pre-Apprenticeship can also earn indus-

try-recognized credentials including UBC scaffold training and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) construction safety.

In the Painting Pre-Apprenticeship training program, students can earn a pre-apprentice certificate of completion that offers registered apprenticeship opportunities and on-the-job experience.

Students in the Painting Pre-Apprenticeship also earn industry-recognized credentials from the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA).

Job Corps is funded through the U.S. Department of Labor and has been around for 60 years. However, President Donald Trump's 2026 budget proposal would eliminate the

program entirely.

In addition, DODGE cuts have already disrupted students' ability to access the program by cutting necessary administrative staff, which helps with the onboarding process.

"It is a shame that the federal government does not see the benefit of these programs, which help strengthen the pipeline of skilled labor to the construction industry," said George Capel, Government Relations Director for the West Virginia Building and Construction Trades.

"We intend to advocate for the preservation of the Job Corps Program with our friends in leadership in Washington in hopes that these programs can continue to exist," said Capel. ■

U.S. District Court

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age of PLAs on "large-scale construction projects," according to a memo obtained by Construction Dive.

That order conflicted with an executive order from Biden's time in the White House, which mandated use of PLAs on projects receiving \$35 million or more in federal funds.

Then, on April 9, NABTU and the Baltimore-D.C. Metro Building and Construction Trades Council filed suit in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia, claiming the exclusion "interferes with Plaintiffs' ongoing practice of negotiating such agreements with contractors bidding on federal large-scale construction projects."

NABTU President Sean McGarvey praised the ruling.

"PLAs aren't political gimmicks or special-interest carveouts," McGarvey said in a statement. "They are proven workforce development

tools that undergird strong economic growth in communities across the country."

While some non-union organizations have protested this ruling, McGarvey went on to say that the ruling helps both union and non-union construction outfits.

"PLAs aren't exclusive to union contractors," said McGarvey. "In fact, countless traditionally non-union contractors work on PLA projects across the country."

Despite the injunction, the landscape around federal PLAs remains unclear.

President Donald Trump has yet to remove Biden's executive order, despite signing one of his own guiding rulemaking at agencies away from using PLAs and other collective bargaining agreements.

As the ACT Report goes to print, this story is still developing. ■

Trades Attend Annual CCAWV Conference



George Capel, Government Relations Director for the West Virginia Building and Construction Trades Council, speaks with conference attendees at the WV County Commissioners Association (CCAWV) Conference in Roanoke, West Virginia.

Capel represented the trades by helping to educate new Commissioners as to the complex details surrounding the bidding process in public construction as well as the benefits of union craft apprenticeship programs.

"It is important for us to meet folks where they are to develop relationships and also let them know about the great things we have going on in the organized trades," said Capel.

Cities in WV Border States Pass Prevailing Wage to Enhance Construction Industry

Over the course of the past year, cities in Ohio and Virginia have passed or proposed certain ordinances to pay prevailing wages on city-funded construction projects.

Late last year, the city of Richmond, Virginia passed a law, requiring that all city-funded construction projects, valued at \$250,000 or more, must adhere to prevailing wage requirements beginning July 1, 2025.

According to the city's website, it's a pay rate and level of benefits that contractors and subcontractors must pay workers, equal to what similar laborers in the area receive.

Recently, the city of Columbus, Ohio also proposed their own ordinance which would expand on al-

ready-existing prevailing wage laws the city has, which align with the state of Ohio.

The new Columbus ordinance, proposed by Columbus City Council President Pro Tempore Rob Dorans on June 11, would extend this requirement to private projects receiving at least \$500,000 in investment from the city, including incentives like tax abatements.

Dorans says he believes that if a large private project gets city investment, it should have to pay construction workers fair wages.

"If in fact we're going to put city investment into this, it's also important for us to consider what the city is getting out of it," Dorans said of pri-

vate projects.

In addition to his position as City Council President Pro Tempore, Dorans advocates for construction workers' unions in his other job as the chief counsel for ACT (Affiliated

pay but also benefits like retirement, health and overtime.

The new prevailing wage requirement for some private projects, if passed, would be enforced by the city's Labor Commission, which



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Boilermaker Apprentice Wins Runner-Up



Jeffrey Rawson (center), Boilermaker 667 apprentice, poses with Bruce Forshee (left), Business Manager for Boilermakers 667, and Kurt Tabor (right), Assistant Business Manager for Boilermakers 667.

Rawson won Runner-Up in the Southeast Area Joint Apprenticeship Council (SAJAC) Apprentice Competition in Savannah, Georgia.

The competition consisted of a mix of all Boilermaker skills, including welding, blueprint reading, layout, rigging, and safety regulations as well as a written test on general knowledge.

"Jeffrey is going to make a great Boilermaker," said Forshee. "We are so proud of our apprenticeship program, and Jeffrey is a testament to the great Boilermakers that our program produces."

Rawson now heads to the National Apprentice Competition, which will be held in Savannah, Georgia in August.

Construction Trades) Ohio.

The Ohio Department of Commerce sets the prevailing wage by county for different construction jobs, like roofers, plumbers, carpenters, etc.

The prevailing wage encompasses

would investigate complaints.

Noncompliance could result in being barred from working with the city for up to three years.

Cincinnati passed a similar policy to the one proposed in Columbus back in 2016. ■

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