

Workers To Get State Prevailing Wage

By Fred Pace/REGISTER-HERALD BUSINESS EDITOR

Construction workers who will build the new Beckley Higher Education Center will be paid the state prevailing wage, according to counsel for the Raleigh County Commission.

"Based upon a recent opinion of the state commissioner of labor and the attorney general, the Raleigh County Commission is of the opinion the construction phase of the higher education project may be based upon state prevailing wage," commission attorney Bill Roop said.

Roop made his comments during Tuesday's county commission meeting.

Father Thomas Acker, executive director of The Educational Foundation, the group building the center, said earlier the federal grant states very clearly it doesn't fall under the Davis-Bacon Act.

However, Sen. Robert C. Byrd requested the project be bid under the Davis-Bacon Act, if possible, Roop said.

Commission president John Aliff and Commissioners John Humphrey and Pat Reed all agreed to accept the findings and bid the project based upon state prevailing wage, which is determined by the West Virginia Division of Labor.

"We must follow the law," Aliff said.

Wayne Rebich with the Affiliated Construction Trades Foundation thanked commissioners for their quick response to the situation.

"Your hard work and quick action in finding a resolution to this situation is to be commended," Rebich said.

Architects revised the bid due date and opening of the bids. Bids for construction are now due by 3 p.m. April 11 and they will be opened publicly at a special meeting of the commission, also at 3 p.m. the same day.

Land preparation for the three-story facility is complete. Officials hope to break ground on the project by April with a targeted opening date sometime next year.

The Beckley Higher Education Center is part of a multimillion-dollar project near Interstate 64 east of town. Once finished, it will serve as a regional campus for eight colleges and universities.