$2.5 BILLION COAL-TO-GASOLINE PROJECT MOVES FORWARD

A $2.5 billion coal-to-gasoline project being developed in Mingo County by TransGas Development Systems took a major step forward on October 28.

The developer announced that Korean company SK Engineering & Construction America will partner on the project. SK is one of the largest construction companies in the world specializing in refineries. They will not only be the project contractor but will undertake the up-front engineering work as well.

Also announced was the company’s commitment to use local union building trade’s workers to construct the project. A letter of intent has been signed committing the project contractor to negotiating a project agreement. Negotiations are currently underway.

The plant will use 3 million tons of coal per year and produce 756,000 gallons of 92 octane gasoline per day. A German company, Uhde, will provide the technology needed to transform the coal into a gas. Then an ExxonMobile company will provide the technology to convert the

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In addition Kelly Moss, President of Apex Pipeline Services led a discussion about contacts with major gas industry construction buyers. Apex has been successful getting a variety of pipeline projects and Moss went over suggestions contractors might follow to get opportunities to bid.

“Right now they are not looking for contractors and they don’t know who you are,” said Moss speaking about gas industry construction buyers. “Local union contractors need to get involved in gas industry meetings so they can make personal contacts and get their company names recognized.”

Marketing approaches were also discussed. Many of the companies coming for the Marcellus Shale gas are from outside of the area and don’t know about the value union workers and contractors bring.

It was agreed more information about skills, productivity, apprenticeship and training, alcohol and drug free programs and initiatives like Helmet’s to Hardhats need to be developed.

According to a U.S. Department of Energy report $200 billion of natural gas will be extracted from the Marcellus Shale gas fields in West Virginia, Pennsylvania and New York in the next ten years.
CANDIDATES WANTED FOR HEAVY DUTY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR APPRENTICESHIP

Operating Engineers Local 132 wants qualified candidates for their heavy duty equipment operator apprenticeship program.

The three year program focuses on all aspects of operating heavy equipment including bulldozers, backhoes, cranes, and excavators. “We focus on safety and productivity,” said Charles Parker, Training Director.

Each year an apprentice spends five weeks at the training center located south of Parkersburg, most of which is during the winter months. Apprentices must also get at least 1,000 hours of paid on the job training each year. Applications will be accepted at any Workforce West Virginia Center starting December 6 through December 17, between the hours of 9:00 am and 3:00 pm, Monday through Friday.

In order to qualify a person must be at least 18 years old, have a high school diploma or GED and have been a resident of West Virginia for at least one year.

In addition, a successful applicant will have a valid WV drivers license, and be physically able to perform the work of the trade.

An aptitude test will be given at the Workforce Center and a drug test may be required at a later date.

The recruitment, selection, employment and training of apprentices shall be without discrimination because of age, race, color, religion, national origin, or sex and will conform to ADA regulations.

For more information call training Director Charles Parker at (304) 273-4852.

IRON WORKERS 301 WANTS APPRENTICES

The Iron Workers Local 301 Apprenticeship Training Program in Charleston is accepting applications for their Winter term.

Applications are taken year round, Monday thru Friday, at 2425 Hampshire Drive in Charleston, from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm.

To be considered in the upcoming class you must submit your application no later than Friday, December 3, 2010.

An aptitude test will be given on Saturday December 4 and interviews on Saturday December 11.

The Iron Workers Joint Apprenticeship Training Program teaches in the classroom as well as on the job.

Classes are held two nights a week, allowing on-the-job learning while getting paid.

The goal is to educate new workers how to safely, efficiently, and effectively perform all aspects of the trade.

Class consist of a variety of applications including structural, ornamental, and reinforcing, as well as mathematics, welding, and rigging.

The Apprenticeship is a three year program starting out at 60% of Journeyman wage scale with full benefits.

Increases are given every six months until training is complete.

Applicants must be at least 18 years of age, have a high school diploma or GED, and live, for at least the last year, in the area covered by Local 301 which includes the WV Counties of Boone, Braxton, Clay, Fayette, Kanawha, Lincoln, Logan, McDowell, Mingo, Nicholas, Putnam, Raleigh, Webster, Wyoming and the southern half of Randolph.

Also included are the Virginia Counties of Buchanan, Dickerson, Russell, Tazewell, Wise and Washington, and Pike County Kentucky.

If selected, a drug test will also be required.

All applications will be received without regard to race, color, religion, national origin, or sex.

For more information contact Rick Barker, Apprenticeship Coordinator, at 304-342-5343 or visit their web site at ironworkers301.com.

RELIABLE ENERGY FORUM

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gas into methanol and then to gasoline.

The company received an air permit from the state DEP earlier this year.

However the permit is currently being challenged.

Making gasoline from coal is not new and has been done since World War II.

This project would be the most advanced technology and when built would be the largest coal to gasoline producer in the world, according to developer Adam Victor.

“It’s an ambitious plan and we fully support their efforts,” said Steve Burton, Business Manager of the Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Council.

Significant engineering work must now take place in order to get project financing.

MEMBERS OF THE North Central WV Building Trades attend a meeting on Reliable Energy in Clarksburg in late October. The event focused on the need to improve the electric transmission grid in West Virginia and surrounding areas. A proposed $2 billion PATH transmission line is being considered by various state agencies. If approved by state regulators the 765KV line will go from the John Amos plant in Putnam County, to a major new substation in Hardy County and then into Maryland. The project developers have committed to build with local building trades workers.
Frustrated with the lack of support for local workers members of the Building Trades protested last month at the State School Building Authorities headquarters in Charleston.

The group, led by representatives from the Roofers and Sheet Metal Workers unions also questioned the apparent reversal on quality contracting requirements by the SBA. The protest took place on October 21, a month after ACT representatives appeared before the SBA with evidence of identity documentation problems for workers of Frye Roofing Inc. Although Frye is located in Bluefield, WV, the majority of their workforce comes from North Carolina.

ACT gave the SBA evidence showing 25 of 31 workers on Frye payroll documents has some sort of problem with their identification. Either with numbers that did not match names or could not be verifed as the same person.

ACT had also brought to the SBA's attention months earlier the issue of out-of-state workers, evidence of late project completion, a settlement agreement between Frye and the WV DOL for $113,000 in back wages, the lack of apprenticeship or benefit funds, and numerous potential payroll violations.

"Local workers and companies need the jobs created with our tax funds," said Joe Strain, Business Agent for Roofers Local 242 in Parkersburg. "We want to compete on a level playing field and asked the SBA to look into a variety of problems, but we have heard very little."

The SBA has asked the WV DOL to investigate the identity questions however the DOL has no authority nor the tools to do so. In addition, the SBA has refused to initiate any investigation through the US Social Security office, instead they suggested ACT do so.

"They have access to all the payroll documents but chose to ignore the problems on their own projects," said ACT Representative Wayne Rebich. "This is not the SBA we are used to, they have been a leader in quality contracting and we just don’t know why they now settle for the minimum."

PROTESTING THE STATE SCHOOL BUILDING AUTHORITY and Executive Director Mark Manchin’s lack of support for making sure quality contracting policies are followed are members of the Roofers and Sheet Metal Workers.