Union workers in Ohio have faced tremendous challenges in recent years. The election of Republican Governor John Kasich together with republican majorities in the House and Senate resulted in an attack on collective bargaining for public employees and attacks on prevailing wage and projects agreements important to construction workers.

“We need more tools to combat these attacks,” said Council Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Duffy. “We looked around at other states and saw our neighbor in West Virginia had a fighting organization with ACT.”

Also at the convention Duffy was re-elected as Secretary-Treasurer.
Results of a comprehensive investigation into the questionable record and history of American Erection LLC and related companies was brought to the attention of the West Virginia School Building Authority.

Chad Rink of the Iron Workers in Pittsburgh made the presentation at the SBA’s September 17 meeting in Charleston because of the company’s recent award on a school project in Preston County.

Rink explained the relationship between the owners of American Erection and a number of companies with significant problems.

The owner of American Erection is listed as Celeste Wilhelm, and her husband Ed Wilhelm operated W&K Steel and W&K Erection, two companies with a troubled past.

Problems include bankruptcy filings, creditor debt, completion and timeliness issues and even a ban by the city of Pittsburgh for running a sweatshop.

American Erection operates out of the former W&K Steel address in Pittsburgh and they use many of the former W&K employees.

Ed Wilhelm has been involved in at least six bankruptcies since 2001 including May 2011 filings for both W&K Steel and W&K Erection.

“We want to bring these issues to the SBA so you will be aware of the problems and protect the citizens of West Virginia,” said Rink.

The members of the SBA, including Steve Burton of the Tri-State Building Trades, asked the staff to review the documents provided by Rink and to monitor the situation.

GAS CUSTOMERS URGED TO CONTACT PSC

Thousands of Hope Gas customers received a card in their newspaper recently.

The message was simple – ask the state Public Service Commission to stop letting Dominion Hope pass on their losses to customers.

ACT experts have uncovered the practice of hedging – locking in gas prices – that have led to millions in losses.

The losses are buried in complicated gas rates costing consumers millions.

And a question still remains – is Hope Gas parent corporation Dominion Resources profiting from the losses of their affiliate?

Hope Gas paid their sister company Virginia Power Energy Marketing millions for the hedge deals, but VPEM profits remain secret.

The back of the card says, Dominion-Hope Gas has lost tens of millions of dollars due to “hedging” gas prices. Now they’re asking me to cover those losses while gas prices are the lowest in a decade.

They gambled and lost — month after month while gas prices fell — and now I have to pay?

Will the PSC continue to let Dominion-Hope pass their gambling losses to rate payers even after they have lost more than $22 million with their bad business decisions?

And is it right to allow Dominion-Hope to make deals with their sister company that may be profiting from those losses?

I’m asking the PSC to put some controls in place to protect my gas rates from climbing any further because of Dominion-Hope’s gambling.

And Dominion-Hope must be told to pay the price for their bad decisions, not us customers.

Dominion-Hope Gas Gambles, Customers Pay the Price!

Tell the PSC to stop Dominion-Hope’s gambling that cost its customers $22 million.

Message from the WV State Building & Construction Trades

This informational card was sent to 51,000 people in the Fairmont, Clarksburg and Parkersburg area urging them to return it to the state Public Service Commission.
COPE ENDORSEMENTS FOR 2012 ELECTION

The Committee on Political Education, an arm of the WV AFL-CIO, has endorsed the following candidates because of their positions and track records on labor issues.

How you and your family vote is a personal decision but please give the labor endorsed your consideration.

Last day to register – Tuesday, October 16
Early voting starts Wednesday, October 24
Absentee ballots can be requested through Wednesday, October 31
Election Day – Tuesday, November 6
Contact your County Clerk for more information.

Ohio State Building Trades Council Endorsements

President – Barack Obama
U.S. Senate - Sherrod Brown
Amendment 2 – Vote Yes

AN IMPORTANT MESSAGE FROM OHIO STATE BUILDING & CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL

TAKEN THE TIME TO LEARN MORE ABOUT WHERE EACH CANDIDATE FOR PRESIDENT STANDS ON THE ISSUES THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU AND YOUR FAMILY.

YOUR UNION RECOMMENDS PRESIDENT BARACK OBAMA

PROJECT LABOR AGREEMENTS.
On Feb. 6, 2009, President Obama signed an executive order encouraging the use of project labor agreements (PLAs) on federally funded construction projects in excess of $25 million. This executive order overturned a ban on federal PLAs instituted by President George W. Bush.

DAVIS-BACON PREVAILING WAGE REQUIREMENTS.
On Feb. 23, 2009, President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (the “stimulus” bill) that included tens of billions of dollars for infrastructure construction and repair. This law included federal Davis-Bacon Act requirements for all construction investments included in the law.

MOUNT ROMNEY: CEO OF BAIN CAPITAL

“If I become president of the United States, I will curb the practice we have in this country of giving union bosses an unfair advantage in contracting. One of the first things I’ll do…actually on Day One…is I will end the government’s favoritism towards unions in contracting and federal projects and end project labor agreements, and I will fight to repeal Davis-Bacon.”

—Mitt Romney, speaking to the Associated Builders and Contractors (ABC) convention upon receiving the group’s endorsement on Feb. 23, 2012

MOUNT ROMNEY IS CLEARLY THE WRONG CHOICE FOR AMERICA’S BUILDING TRADES UNIONS

For more information, contact OHIO AFL-CIO at 614-224-8271.
Cowgirl Up Inc, a site reclamation contractor, has been indicted by a federal grand jury for an alleged false billing scheme.

Also indicted was the company’s field manager Spence Charles Wooddell.

The company owner is listed as Tina Wooddell according to records kept by the U.S. Office of Surface Mining and Reclamation.

The company was low bidder on contracts to perform reclamation work at abandoned mines.

The indictment alleges Spencer Charles Wooddell submitted false invoices to the West Virginia Division of Environmental Protection with charges for private work unrelated to a DEP maintenance contract.

Also alleged is the creation of false documents to cover up the charges and billing for work never performed.

Entitled ‘United States of America v. Cowgirl Up Inc, Spencer Charles Wooddell’ the 12 page, 10 count indictment went into detail about the allegations.

“‘It was an object of the scheme for defendants Spencer Charles Wooddell and Cowgirl Up to enrich themselves and others … by unlawfully submitting fraudulent invoice,’” the indictment stated.

Nine project sites were identified between 2007 and 2011 in the indictment which was filed on September 18.

An amount of more than $120,000 listed as the illegal payment.

According to the indictment Cowgirl Up Inc was low bidder on two maintenance contracts that had unit prices for various tasks.

Each contract had a maximum amount that could be spent on any one location.

In order to avoid the caps documents including invoices and false certified payrolls were created and manipulated to shift work from other reclamation sites, or private unrelated projects.

According to press reports if convicted on all counts Wooddell faces up to 200 years in prison and a $2.5 million fine.

Cowgirl Up Inc could be fined $5 million.

State records show the company, which was formed in 2004, has been paid more than $20 million since 2004 through DEP contracts.

The company is still allowed to bid public projects.

At an arraignment held before Judge Mary Stanly on October 3 both Wooddell and a representative for the company pled not guilty.

Wooddell was released on a $10,000 bond.

TRI-STATE TRADES TAILGATE

Around 500 local union construction workers and their families enjoyed a tailgate event sponsored by the Tri-State Building and Construction Trades Council at Marshall University.

The event was held prior to the football game between Marshall and Ohio University dubbed the “Battle for the bell” held on Saturday, September 15. The final score was Ohio 27 - Marshall 24.

According to Business Manager Steve Burton volunteers from Operating Engineers Local 132 worked the grill while others chipped in to make an enjoyable event for all.

ACT Report Address Corrections Wanted
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Email: stevewhite@actwv.org or mail to:
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600 Leon Sullivan Way
Charleston, WV 25301