



Director's Report

By Matthew A. Szollosi



Szollosi

The year 2017 brings with it plenty of opportunities and challenges. Undoubtedly, extremists from the far right and far left in the Ohio Legislature and U.S. Congress will once

again push for prevailing wage repeal, right-to-work regulations, prohibitions on project labor agreements, as well as bans on fracking and oil and gas development.

While much of this is ideologically driven, the remaining 80 percent of legislators have no exposure to the

construction industry. It's our job to continue to educate decision-makers, to help them understand why good wages and competitive benefits lead to a quality workforce. However, these efforts extend well past the legislature.

While Act Ohio's Legal Division has worked effectively with agents and organizers across the state to turn projects around, and our Governmental Affairs Division has helped build strong relationships on both sides of the aisle, we have not yet met our goals for our Marketing and Communications Division.

I've stated numerous times, the building trades have a magnificent story to tell, we just don't tell it! Far too many public and private sector decision makers don't know we have over 80 apprenticeship training centers in Ohio, or that collectively,

construction unions invested over \$60 million last year in apprenticeship training. We don't advertise that over 80 percent of Ohio's registered construction apprentices are enrolled in our joint programs, or that many of our apprentices top out and earn over \$50,000 per year with no student debt!

Every one of our affiliates engage in their communities and generously participate in charitable activities; not because the trades are seeking notoriety, but because it's the right thing to do.

We have certainly made some strides, including an upgraded website, this Quarterly Newsletter and professionally created literature. Also, ACT Ohio will soon be making available videos highlighting our apprenticeship training for agents and organizers to

See REPORT page 3.

Butler, Cincinnati Building Trades rally against RTW

On Jan. 9, the West Chester/Liberty Township Journal-News reported that the West Chester Township Trustees had made passing a local "Right to Work" ordinance a top priority of 2017.

After the announcement, the West Chester Township Trustees' public meetings were packed with residents and union members, including members of the Butler County and Cincinnati Building Trades Councils, opposing the Township's efforts. West Chester Township Trustee Lee Wong spoke out against RTW and convinced the other Trustees to table the issue until the 6th Circuit Court of Appeals issues a final ruling on the matter.

In a similar case, the Village of Lincolnshire, Ill. also passed a local RTW law. In that case, the Laborers,



PHOTO: COURTESY OF THE AFL-CIO

Crowds gathered at the We Are Ohio meeting at the UAW Hall prior to the "So Called" Right-To-Work legislation hearing to provide information to the union members.

Operating Engineers and Carpenters were successful in defeating the ordinance in federal court. However, that ruling is being appealed to the 7th Circuit Court of Appeals, which may be setting the stage for the U.S. Supreme Court to take up the issue of whether a local government is

permitted to pass a local RTW law.

In addition to these local RTW efforts, State Rep. John Becker (R-Union Township) has once again introduced a public sector RTW bill in the Ohio House of Representatives.

See RTW page 4.

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A Message from the Legal and Research Department

By Rob Dorans



Dorans

Improving the regulatory climate for our contractors at the local level can pay important dividends for increased work opportunities for our members.

For example, in many areas of the state, unscrupulous contractors consistently attempt to avoid paying

prevailing wage, local taxes, workers' compensation premiums and other employee benefit requirements. By cheating, these low-road contractors lower their cost of business and are able to underbid union contractors.

ACT Ohio works closely with business agents and organizers to hold these contractors accountable when we discover violations of the law, and to strengthen local laws to crack down on these offenders.

Recently, ACT Ohio partnered with the East Central Building and

Construction Trades Council to pass a local registration law for the City of Akron. The law requires all construction contractors operating in the city to register and provide proof of their Bureau of Workers' Compensation Insurance, disclose its owners and other basic business information. The law also requires contractors to inform the Tax Commissioner when operating within the city to make certain they are complying with the local income tax laws.

"I believe the new contractor registration law will ensure

contractors working within the City of Akron are operating on a more even playing field" said Mark Douglas, Executive Secretary of the Tri-County Building Trades.

ACT Ohio worked closely with both the City of Akron and the Tri-County Building Trades to pass the legislation. The ACT Ohio Legal and Research Department will continue to partner with local unions and councils to push new legislation at the local level to promote industry best practices for local construction projects. ■

Columbus Building Trades host career fair

The Columbus/Central Ohio Building and Construction Trades Council (C/COBCTC), its affiliated unions and community partners hosted a construction trades career fair on Jan. 26. The C/COBCTC partnered with Columbus City Schools, Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corporation, Ohio Means Jobs, the City of Columbus and the Ohio State Apprenticeship Council.

The event was a tremendous success with over 300 high school students and young adults in attendance. Building Trades representatives were on hand to discuss union-affiliated apprenticeship programs and provided live demonstrations of bricklaying, electrical and sheet metal related skills.

"Our community partners did an excellent job in reaching out to a diverse group of young people in our community about this event. Our affiliates did a great job providing information about their apprenticeship programs and provided hands-on demonstrations for the attendees," said C/COBCTC Executive Secretary-Treasurer Dorsey Hager. "Many of our current members are nearing retirement and we are focused on recruiting the next generation of skilled construction



Students engaged with the trades at the Columbus/Central Ohio Building and Construction Trades Council's career fair to make a toolbox.



professionals. That is why events like this career fair are critical to building our membership and local workforce."

According to the Ohio Apprenticeship Council, over 80 percent of registered apprentices in Ohio are enrolled in union-affiliated programs. These programs provide students with the highest caliber construction training available. Most programs require 4 or 5 years to

complete, and combine both on-the-job and classroom training.

All union-affiliated programs are tuition free and apprentices earn while they learn, as they are paid for working on construction jobsites as a part of their training. Many programs provide apprentices with credits toward an associate's degree from an affiliated community college. ■

"Our affiliates did a great job providing information about their apprenticeship programs and provided hands-on demonstrations for the attendees"

- Dorsey Hager, C/COBCTC Executive Secretary-Treasurer

AEP commits to building clean energy plans with PLAs

In late 2016, AEP Ohio issued two separate Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for construction of new wind and solar energy generation facilities in Ohio. The two facilities will produce up to 250 megawatts (MW) of wind energy resources and 100 MW of solar energy sources respectively. AEP Ohio is seeking to place these facilities in Southeastern Ohio. Collectively, the projects will produce enough energy to power 350,000 homes.

Both of the RFPs require potential developers to utilize Project Labor Agreements (PLAs) for the

construction of these power generation facilities. Building a project with a PLA ensures the contractor delivers the project to the customer on time and on budget. Through utilization of building trades members from the local area that have graduated from a registered apprenticeship program, the customer is getting the highest quality work product as well.

AEP Ohio is expecting developers to submit their RFPs for the project in mid-February 2017. A decision on the exact location of the new plants is expected in mid-2017. ■



Anti-prevailing wage bill Davis-Bacon repeal bills introduced

Newly minted Lima-area Senator Matt Huffman introduced a bill in the State Senate that would make prevailing wage optional for village, townships, cities, counties, universities and specialty districts.

ACT Ohio will aggressively oppose any attempts to weaken or repeal prevailing wage.

In his letter requesting the support of his colleagues, Sen. Huffman stated that adherence to the prevailing wage standards in the state law often drives up the cost of local projects. He also suggested that because of this significant increase in cost, building projects are simply not occurring.



ACT Ohio is working aggressively to provide information to all 33 state senators proving prevailing wage does not increase the costs of public works

construction and showing the value of prevailing wage from a public policy standpoint. The defeat of this legislation is a top priority for ACT Ohio.

Separately, U.S. Senator Jeff Flake, the junior Senator from Arizona, recently introduced the Transportation Investment Recalibration to Equity (TIRE) Act, which would exempt highway work from prevailing wage requirements.

We have been in contact with Ohio Senators Sherrod Brown and Rob Portman expressing our opposition to this ill-advised proposal. Several other full Davis-Bacon repeal bills have been introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives.

ACT Ohio is working closely with the National Building Trades to ensure the protection of the federal prevailing wage law. ■

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utilize in presentations. Overall, however, we've yet to even scratch the surface on what we can do from a marketing and communications standpoint.

To help move us forward, ACT

Ohio has hired a marketing specialist to create and implement an aggressive, state of the art communications plan. I believe our hiring of Christina Zimmer, who has a proven track record of success, will help us take the next step. I'm excited for her to join our staff.

In the near future, Chris will be reaching out to our affiliates to

gather information on key activities, accomplishments and success stories so we can build awareness amongst potential investors in economic and industrial development, elected officials and the public. I am confident that once we truly begin to tell our story, apprenticeship applications will rise and additional work opportunities will occur.

As always, we will continue to work to create job opportunities for members and increase market share.

Please work safe! ■



Zimmer

Promoting union apprenticeship training

ACT Ohio recently sponsored and attended the Ohio Educational Technology Conference (OETC) in Columbus. With over 4,000 attendees, the conference gave ACT Ohio the opportunity to provide information to educators on how students could apply to apprentice centers across Ohio.

"ACT Ohio is focused on taking

our message of apprenticeship training directly to educators. Conferences like the OETC help us connect with teachers, counselors and school officials from across the state," said ACT Ohio Executive Director Matt Szollosi.

This is the second year ACT Ohio representatives attended the OETC. ■



RTW

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The legislation was co-sponsored by State Reps. Ron Hood (R-Ashville), Tom Brinkman (R-Mt. Lookout), Bill Dean (R-Xenia), Andy Thompson (R-Marietta), Nino Vitale (R-Urbana), Wesley Goodman (R-Cardington), Craig Riedel (R-Defiance), Christina Roegner (R-Hudson), Derek Merrin (R-Monclove Township), Niraji Antani (R-Miami Township), Paul Zeltwanger (R-Mason) and Candice Keller (R-Middletown).

The bill has been referred to the House Finance Committee. ACT Ohio is closely monitoring developments related to the legislation.

Under the guise of "workplace freedom," "Right to Work" and other such misleading monikers, proponents of RTW want all the

benefits of being a union member (good pay, health insurance, retirement, training, safe workplace requirements), but don't want to pay any of the costs associated with securing these standards. At its core, RTW is simply meant to do away with unions.

RTW initiatives are largely based on misconceptions, hatred of unions and a gross lack of understanding of basic federal labor law. Cut through the clouds on this topic and one will realize that, according to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, workers earn 12 percent less in RTW states, and workplace fatalities are 49 percent higher.

There is no place for So-Called "Right to Work" in Ohio! ■

RIGHT TO WORK IS WRONG FOR



Unemployment compensation process underway

As part of the successful effort to halt HB 620 during the lame duck session of the legislature, ACT Ohio Executive Director Matt Szollosi offered to work in close conjunction with Senate President Pro Tem Bob Peterson (R-Washington Court House) and Speaker Pro Tem Kirk Schuring (R-Canton) to help craft a viable solution.

HB 620 proposed deep cuts to both unemployment benefits and eligibility

for workers, thus ACT Ohio is pleased to be working on a compromise proposal with both legislative leaders and other interested parties.

A working committee was assembled that includes Legislative Director of the Operating Engineers Local 18 Mark Totman, President of the Ohio AFL-CIO Tim Burga and ACT Ohio Executive Director Matt Szollosi, as well as representatives from the Ohio Chamber

of Commerce, the Ohio Manufacturers Association and the National Federation of Independent Business.

The agreement reached at the end of the previous legislative session extended the time period for consideration by several months, and also required utilization of a neutral, third party actuary to provide detailed analysis of the fiscal impact of unemployment compensation reform proposals offered

by the business and labor communities.

An actuary has been agreed upon and will be funded equally by labor and management groups. The first meeting of the committee to go over the questions before submission to the actuary was set for late February. While changes to the unemployment system are expected, ACT Ohio is at the negotiation table, fighting to ensure our members receive a fair deal. ■



TELL US ABOUT IT!

**Has your Local Union done something worth noting?
Do you want to see it in the next Tip of the Hard Hat?**

**Send an email to rdorans@actohio.org with 100 words or less
for your chance to be featured! Have a photo? Send that too!**