Director’s Report

By Matthew A. Szollosi

Two years ago this month, HB 394 was introduced in the Ohio House to gut unemployment compensation benefits for Ohio’s workers. The proposal included reducing the number of weeks from 26 to 12, additional waiting weeks, and upwards of $150 per week less in benefits for some of our members. Working in coordination with the Operating Engineers Local 18, the Ohio AFL-CIO, our affiliates, and our contractors, ACT Ohio stopped the bill from moving forward.

In December 2016, HB 620 was introduced, and meant to pass, during the lame duck session of the legislature. It was slightly better than HB 394, which isn’t saying much. Thanks to the strong relationships we’ve built on both sides of the aisle, we were able to stop that bill from passing as well.

Here’s the issue: Ohio’s Unemployment Compensation Trust Fund went insolvent during the Great Recession, and the state had to borrow roughly $3 billion to cover claims. The loan was repaid by increased premiums on Ohio’s employers. The raging debate over the past two years in Columbus is why the trust fund went underwater.

Business groups claim the problem lies on the benefits side and have pushed hard for benefit cuts to resolve the issue. In their opinion, scaling back the total number of claims and reducing the benefits paid to unemployed workers would make the assets in the fund last longer.

I’ve repeatedly argued to legislators that this is nonsense. First and foremost, only 24 percent of Ohio’s unemployed workers even qualify for unemployment.

Second, contrary to the business groups’ claims, Ohio’s workers aren’t just sitting at home on the couch receiving benefits. Ohio actually has the fourth lowest rate of exhaustion of benefits in the country – meaning 45 other states have workers that max out their benefits more than Ohio’s workers.

In addition, Ohio’s benefits are relatively average when compared to other states. In short, it’s not an expenditure problem, it’s a revenue problem.

Last month, HB 382 was introduced by Rep. Kirk Schuring. While it is certainly better than HB 620 or HB 394, the bill is not something that ACT Ohio can support, as it still cuts benefit weeks from 26 to 24, leaves dependency benefits up in the air, and proposes to freeze benefit levels for 10 years. We are still working through this process with key legislative leaders.

This process underscores the need for ACT Ohio and our affiliates to support elected officials that support our members - irrespective of political party. Had we not built strong and lasting relationships with members of both parties, unemployment compensation reform would have passed long ago, and our members would have paid the price.

I hope you and your family have a wonderful holiday season. Work safe!

Terra State Dorms Subject to Prevailing Wage

In August, Scott Lopez, Business Manager of UA Local 50, forwarded information regarding a $14 million student housing and retail project at Terra State Community College in Fremont, to ACT Ohio. Lopez strongly questioned the designation of the project as “not subject to Prevailing Wage,” given the information he had gathered.

After reviewing the information provided by Lopez and other sources, it was clear that the project should be subject to Ohio’s prevailing wage law. ACT Ohio Executive Director Matt Szollosi sent an email to Dr. Jerome Webster, President of Terra State Community College, to address his perspective regarding the project and received no response. ACT Ohio followed up with a very specific Freedom of Information letter (“FOIA”) requesting any and all contracts, correspondence, leases, minutes of meetings, and other targeted documentation, involving the Terra Village Student Housing project.

Upon review and analysis of the information received, ACT Ohio engaged Victor Goodman and Mark Tucker of the Benesch Friedlander firm. Their charge was to pursue, if necessary, a declaratory judgment in Sandusky County Common Pleas Court determining the project to be subject to Ohio’s Prevailing Wage.

Continued on page 4.
A Message from the Legal and Research Department

By Rob Dorans

One of the core functions of the ACT Ohio Legal & Research Department is to enforce Ohio’s Prevailing Wage law. Often, that means working with local unions and councils to investigate contractors that are failing to pay their workers the proper wages and benefits. If cheaters are able to skirt the Prevailing Wage law, they will continue to undercut signatory contractors and take jobs away from members of the Building Trades.

Unfortunately, the State of Ohio has fewer than 5 investigators perusing Prevailing Wage cases. This is why Prevailing Wage enforcement is a top priority for ACT Ohio.

From time to time, I like to share some of our Prevailing Wage enforcement stories to shine a light on how we do this important work.

Late this fall, we were contacted by IBEW Local 972, which had identified a project by the Athens-Hocking-Vinton Counties Alcohol, Drug Addiction and Mental Health Services Board (“317 Board”) that they believed was violating Ohio’s Prevailing Wage law.

The 317 Board planned to build a new office, which would include an inpatient treatment facility. The 317 Board put the project out to bid, and the project specifications required contractors to comply with Ohio’s residential - and not commercial - Prevailing Wage law. Often the wages for residential Prevailing Wage projects are significantly lower than on commercial Prevailing Wage projects. This would mean Building Trades signatory contractors would likely be unsuccessful bidding the project.

The ACT Ohio Legal & Research Department reviewed the project and determined that state law required it to be bid as a commercial Prevailing Wage project. ACT Ohio provided this finding to the 317 Board and requested it properly classify the project or face legal action.

After reviewing our legal opinion on the project, the 317 Board classified the project as commercial Prevailing Wage, which will help ensure that signatory contractors are competitive on bid day.

Without IBEW Local 972 and ACT Ohio investigating and pursuing this project, Building Trades members would likely have had no chance to work on it. This is why we focus on Prevailing Wage enforcement; to ensure that all contractors, union and non-union, pay workers a fair wage while working on public projects.

Bricklayers Open New Northern Ohio Training Center and Admin Offices

On Oct. 21, the OH-KY ADC unveiled their new Northern Ohio Training Center and District Council Offices in Amherst. Coinciding with the Masons Contractors Association of America (MCAA) skills competition, guests were able to watch nearly 30 of the best and highly-skilled apprentices competing to move on to the international competition.

The property was purchased in January 2016 and construction for the training center building started on August 1, with the office building breaking ground on May 1, 2017. The training center is up and running, while the administrative offices are due to open on January 2, 2018.

The training center is 31,937 square feet under roof, including 10,637 sq. ft. in classroom, office, and administrative space. The office building is 8,388 square feet of office space, plus 3,890 sq. ft. of conference space.

District Director Ken Kudela reports that there have been 34 different craftworkers as well as 18 different staff members that have worked on the two buildings.

“The new training center has the classroom space to accommodate up to four classes at a time allowing us to hold multiple classes on the same day thus shortening our class schedule by nearly two months,” said Kudela. “We now have the space to expand as we grow, and with two buildings we have separation between the two functions of the District Council - administrative and training.”
Anti-Prevailing Wage Bills Bills Stall in Columbus

HB 163 (Roeqner, Reidel) and SB 72 (Huffman), companion legislation introduced in both chambers of the Ohio Legislature, have failed to get any traction. Introduced in March, the bills are designed to make Prevailing Wage optional for villages, townships, cities, counties, universities, and specialty districts.

To date, the House version had sponsor testimony in June, wherein the bill sponsors testified to the typical nonsense of 30% savings if Prevailing Wage requirements are removed; no difference in quality between union and non-union, etc. The House version then received proponent testimony in late September, with the Americans for Prosperity group suggesting more of the same. ACT Ohio has received word that no further hearings are likely in the House.

The bill has yet to receive sponsor testimony in the Senate.

The County Commissioners Association of Ohio, the Ohio Municipal League, and the Ohio Townships Association all expressed their support for the bills – without even the courtesy of a phone call to the Building Trades. Their actions are disappointing to say the least.

ACT Ohio will continue to aggressively maintain opposition to any anti-Prevailing Wage bills.

Second Generation Coach is Giving Back in Wadsworth

Mike Might, Business Manager of IBEW Local 306 in Akron, has football in his blood. “There has been a Might coaching youth football in this area since 1961,” he said, proudly explaining that his father, Ralph Might, introduced him to coaching.

His father, said Might, set a great example. “My job is to keep encouraging these kids, win or lose. My records have varied, but the goal is to keep them in the program and help them keep enjoying the sport.”

“I just love working with the kids,” he said. “I tell them at the first practice that at the end of the season I want them to have become a better football player while having fun, and I want them to want to come back the following year.”

“I just love working with the kids…I tell them at the first practice that at the end of the season I want them to have become a better football player while having fun, and I want them to want to come back the following year.”

- Mike Might, IBEW Local 306 Business Manager

Might started his own coaching career in 1983 in Kenmore, and had the privilege of coaching with his dad in the 1983 and 1984 seasons. His brother Greg has also coached.

Mike has since moved to Wadsworth and has picked right up coaching there. His own legacy was evident last season, when a young man he had coached in 1997 joined the league as a coach himself. “I just love the game, and want to pass that love on.”

Might’s two sons both played youth football, but chose other activities in high school. Might didn’t take it personally, but explained that his sons did have to do something, no matter the sport. “The lessons you learn as a part of a team are so important,” he stressed. “These are lessons that are hard to teach adults if they haven’t learned them as kids.” Both of Might’s sons are now apprentices in the local IBEW training program.

Might said that he was bitten by the football bug early and just loves the game. “My first date with my wife was dinner after a football game.” His wife’s support has been crucial, he says. “Coaching takes a lot of time and commitment, but the reward is worth it.” He often jokes that his ashes will have to be spread over both the Kenmore and Wadsworth fields, where he has spent so much of his life.

“Having the chance to be involved in the game, work with the kids, and be a positive role model; that’s what keeps me coming back.”

West Virginia School Building Authority Says No Savings Realized from Prevailing Wage Repeal

In a report from the School Building Authority (SBA) of West Virginia dated March 2017, Director of School Planning and Construction Scott Raines highlighted the lack of impact on construction costs by West Virginia’s repeal of Prevailing Wage on school projects.

“The overall cost of school construction does not reflect a reduction in overall construction costs on SBA Projects currently,” Raines wrote in his report. “At this time, the SBA is not realizing an overall savings that would allow for the ‘construction of five schools for the price of three’ as some have previously claimed.”

Raines included detailed spreadsheet with his report, showing labor wage rates both before the repeal (2015) and after. “As you can see from the comparison,” said Raines, “the wages paid to employees post-repeal are lower than those paid prior to the repeal. These differences are pretty dramatic depending on the classification of the employee.”

 Plumbers/Pipefitters, for instance, were paid an average of $22.54/hour less post-repeal, and Sheet Metal Workers saw an average drop in wages of $13.36. Every craft saw some loss of wages, ranging from $5.88 per hour to $22.54 per hour.

This report is an example of the “Race to the Bottom” often cited by Prevailing Wage advocates, like ACT Ohio. Cutting a journeyperson’s wages - sometimes by more than half - is a sure way to land more skilled craftsmen and women on public assistance; ultimately costing taxpayers infinitely more than paying Building Trades workers the Prevailing Wage.
City of Columbus, Building Trades Sign Historic Community Benefit Agreement

On Oct. 31, the City of Columbus and the Columbus/Central Ohio Building Trades inked an historic Community Benefit Agreement (CBA) to build the new Columbus Fire Station #35.

The CBA requires that all contractors awarded contracts for the construction of the Fire Station #35 will be required to utilize highly skilled local workers from the local Building Trades unions.

Additionally, the CBA sets forth a commitment by the Columbus/Central Ohio Building Trades and the City of Columbus to provide training opportunities in the construction industry to city residents. These training programs will help diversify the local construction industry and provide good paying careers for many in economically underserved areas of Columbus.

“The signing and implementation of this Community Benefit Agreement represents an enormous opportunity for both the Building Trades and the City, said Dorsey Hager, Executive Secretary-Treasurer for the Columbus/Central Ohio Building Trades. “Building Trades apprenticeships are the portal into our local unions and the beginning of a direct path to the middle class.” Hager stressed that all registered Building Trades apprenticeship programs work with local colleges to ensure apprentices earn tuition-free college credits. “Not only are apprentices on the path to the middle class, but also on a path toward a college degree, if they choose to go that route, at no cost to them or to the taxpayers,” said Hager.

“This partnership between the City of Columbus and the Building Trades will provide the city highly trained, local, skilled tradesmen and women who will complete this project safely, on time, and under budget while creating career opportunities in the Building Trades,” said Hager.

Columbus/Central Ohio Building Trades Executive Secretary-Treasurer Dorsey Hager (left) looks on as Columbus Mayor Andrew Ginther signs the city’s first Community benefit Agreement.

Prevailing Wage

Continued from Page 1.

statute. A demand letter from Goodman and Tucker was sent to Dr. Webster on October 17, 2017, laying out in extensive detail the basis for the project being subject to the law.

On October 31, Jim Schmidt, President of UHS-Terra sent a response stating “UHS-Terra is the developer of that project and is solely responsible for the construction of the project. UHS-Terra, LLC is treating the project as a Prevailing Wage project and will comply with Ohio’s Prevailing Wage statute.”

“The applicability of Prevailing Wage to projects like this is important because the law prevents the severe undercutting of market-based wages and benefits,” said Lopez. “The law is in place to provide a level playing field for contractors to compete while providing the customer with good value.”

ACT Ohio is still in the process of confirming all contracts involving the Terra Village Student Housing Project will issued in compliance with law.
Gabe Serna: A Student Apprentice Perspective

Serna believes that the Building Trades need to be promoted more in schools. “It’s important to get rid of stigmas and explain to people what an apprenticeship really is”, he said. “I was shown a video about the skills gap, which was really helpful in making my decision. Show the students more numbers and facts, and show the teachers what we’re actually doing in apprenticeship.”

ACT Ohio spends time and resources on visiting high schools, career technical centers, and conferences targeting teachers, guidance counselors, and school board members to ensure both students and their influencers understand the benefits of Building Trades apprenticeships and connecting them with their local JATCs.

For more information on opportunities on the Sheet Metal Workers Local 24 apprentice program, contact Eugene Frazier at 937-898-7676 or local24appr@yahoo.com. For more information on Building Trades apprenticeship opportunities across Ohio, contact Chris Zimmer at ACT Ohio at 614-228-5446 or czimmer@actohio.or.

ACT Ohio: Promoting Building Trades Apprenticeships

Since May, ACT Ohio staff has visited nine high schools around the state to promote Building Trades apprenticeships. Nearly 400 high school juniors and seniors have received information on the benefits of a Building Trades career.

Included in the presentation is information comparing salaries of those in the restaurant and service industries versus those in the local Building Trades, as well as the latest statistics on student debt. “When the kids see how much they could be making in four or five years – while their friends are just beginning to pay off massive student debt – that’s when I start to see lightbulbs go off,” said ACT Ohio Communications Specialist Chris Zimmer.

ACT Ohio has also been a featured presenter at the All Ohio Counselors Conference and the Ohio Association of Career Technical Educators Conference. Both presentations were met with enthusiasm from participants.

“Because of the Building Trades apprenticeship opportunities on the Sheet Metal Workers Local 24 apprentice program, contact Eugene Frazier at 937-898-7676 or local24appr@yahoo.com. For more information on Building Trades apprenticeship opportunities across Ohio, contact Chris Zimmer at ACT Ohio at 614-228-5446 or czimmer@actohio.or.”

Zimmer is excited about including members of the Building Trades in her presentation. “Getting the Training Coordinator or Business Manager in front of the kids enables them to see the professionalism of our affiliates,” said Zimmer. “They are able to ask questions directly to folks who have done the work, which makes a huge difference.”

Additional presentations across the state are being planned for the spring. If you would like to participate in a presentation, or know a high school teacher or counselor who would be interested in more information, please contact Chris Zimmer at czimmer@actohio.or or 614-228-5446.

### Let’s Compare:

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### ACT OHIO QUARTERLY: DECEMBER 2017

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Happy Holidays from ACT Ohio

We’re thankful for the work you do building Ohio’s future!

www.actohio.org  614-228-5446
Welcome Home Andrew Moss!

Local 550 President and Business Agent Rick Moss welcomes home his son Andrew Moss, a Specialist/Sniper in the 148th National Guard Infantry. He has been away from his family serving our country overseas since January. On behalf of our 94,000 members, THANK YOU & WELCOME HOME, ANDREW!

Laborers Host Events During Apprenticeship Week

The Laborers were busy during National Apprenticeship Week, Nov. 13-17. On Nov. 14, the Laborers District Counsel hosted an open house at their Howard, Ohio training center. On Nov. 16, Laborers’ Local 265 and John R. Jurgensen Company hosted a skills competition at Roger Bacon High School in Cincinnati. On Nov. 17, the Laborers District Council co-hosted a recognition of female apprentices in heavy highway construction with Beaver Excavating in Findlay. The same day, Local 894 participated in the Apprentice Fair in Akron. The Laborers were also represented at the Ohio School Boards Association Capital Conference Trade Show.

Boyarko Promoting Pipe Trades

UA Local 396 has been busy with outreach events this year. Training Director Rick Boyarko reports that he jumps at the opportunity to speak within the community. In the past few months, he’s addressed high school students, parent groups, hosted a Kent State Rural Scholars workshop at his facility, and attended several area career fairs.

Sink Honored for Dedication

Connie Sink, Regional Training Coordinator for Local 132, is retiring after 30 years in the construction industry. Connie sits on the Advisory Board for Ft. Hayes High School (Columbus) construction program, and was honored for her service in October. Adam Viney, Bricklaying and Concrete instructor at Ft. Hayes, who presented the award to Sink, said she has been a tremendous resource, who has “helped the program succeed in training students for the real world expectations.”

Local 24 Hosts Open House and Tours

Sheet Metal Workers Local 24 in Dayton hosted several events during National Apprenticeship Week, Nov. 13-17. Both the welding and HVAC-R programs hosted presentations and the JATC hosted an open house of Thursday, Nov. 16.

Sheet Metal Workers Local 24 also collaborated with the Career Technology and Education Center of Licking County (C-Tec) and Wolf Metal during National Apprenticeship Week for a tour of Wolf’s facility. After the tour, students headed to UA 189 for lunch where Sheet Metal Training Coordinator Rob Gartner and UA Training Director Rich Manley discussed the opportunities in apprenticeship.

Locals Promote Trade, Volunteer

The Toledo Electrical JATC, in partnership with North America’s Building Trades Unions and the U.S. Department of Labor, hosted an Apprenticeship Open House event in honor of National Apprenticeship Week on Nov. 17. Event attendees learned firsthand about apprenticeships, the Skills USA experience, pre-apprenticeship, and how the Toledo Electrical JATC works with vocational schools and schools with electrical programs to provide a pathway for students to compete in Skills USA competitions.

For the past three years Fort Steuben has presented the Nutcracker Village and Advent Market. IBEW Local 212 began volunteering with Habitat for Humanity last year, working on six houses over that time, doing the electrical work and also building walls, setting scaffolds, building roofs, and whatever else needed to be done. It not only promotes the work of the local IBEW, but offers an opportunity for additional training for members in the residential sector.

IBEW Local 246 members Frank Redmond, David Pietro, Jake Lilly, and Eric Nutter donated their time by helping other volunteers erect the 35 foot steel framed Christmas Tree and getting power to the tree and train that encircles the tree. The enormous feat took 8-10 volunteers over nine hours. Last year members built, wired, and installed four temporary electric panels to power the whole village.

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Trades Donate to Veterans Hospital

Iron Workers Local 290 on one of their benches: L to R: Billy Klyburn, Jeff Bush Business Manager, David Cox Business Agent; Mike Yauger and Ed Watson.
On November 29, the Ohio House unanimously passed HB 98, the Ohio High School Opportunity Act. The bill specifically encourages school districts across the state to promote career presentations to students.

Co-sponsored by Rep. Mike Duffey (R-Worthington) and Rep. Kristin Boggs (D–Columbus), the bill is supported by ACT Ohio, the Ohio Chamber of Commerce, various skilled trade groups, and manufacturing companies.

Rep. Duffey began working on this legislation after attending a panel discussion on career readiness that included Ohio State Building and Construction Trade Council Secretary-Treasurer Dennis Duffey (no relation to the Representative). “There is a lot of pressure to send every kid to college,” he said. “That is an unrealistic goal,” he continued. “It’s time to encourage conversations with students about the many high paying jobs that exist in the skilled trades – many of which require no college debt and often pay surprisingly high wages utilizing on-the-job training.”

Under current law, schools can refuse access to nearly any recruiter. HB 98 states that “No school district board of education shall impose any restriction on the presentation of career information to students... The board shall provide equal access to any of the district’s employment or placement services to all of the entities described in this division.”

HB 98 also details that entities such as the Building Trades and ACT Ohio should have at least two opportunities during the school year to present career information to students in grades nine through twelve. This can be done in a classroom presentation, at an opportunity fair, or on a one-on-one basis.

“Life after graduation is rarely one size fits all. Everyone’s path is different,” said Rep. Boggs. “As college costs continue to rise, it’s incredibly important for young people to know their options. HB 98 gives students the information and tools they need to make the career decision that best fits them.”

ACT Ohio supports HB 98 as it moves to the Ohio Senate for further consideration.