

THE WEST END WIRE



An Internet Publication For The Information And Enjoyment Of Our
Employees And Friends Of WEST END ELECTRIC CO., INC.

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Prevailing wage and construction unions go hand in hand. For many of us, this is all we've ever known. We were not a part of the battle to get the laws passed that we enjoy today. So, exactly what is prevailing wage? I did some research, and this is what I discovered.

It is a policy that places value on a highly skilled and productive workforce. It is a policy that promotes safe, high-quality construction projects. It is a policy that promotes the use of local contractors and local workers. Prevailing wage does all this while making sure the State doesn't pay more than the typical rate on construction projects.

The principle behind prevailing wage is simple: On public construction projects, workers must be paid the "prevailing rate" for their work. By law, the "prevailing rate" matches the local rate – the market rate already being paid in the community where the work is being done. The prevailing rate is the most common wage that an Electrician, Carpenter, Ironworker, Plumber, Bricklayer, or Laborer makes in that community.

In Ohio, prevailing rate applies to all construction projects (except Schools) paid for by State Taxpayers. Cities, Counties, and some School Districts have similar local policies. School work used to be included in the Ohio prevailing rate, until the late 1990's. On Federal projects, prevailing wage is required by the Davis-Bacon Act, which Congress passed in 1931.

Prevailing wage creates a uniform “specification” for labor in the competitive bidding process. By creating a standard for labor, prevailing wage requires contractors to compete for public projects on factors such as skill, productivity, innovation, and management abilities – not on who can scrape up the cheapest workforce. It does this by simply requiring the employers who bid on Taxpayer - funded projects to pay the same rates being paid on private construction work – no more, no less. Opponents claimed over and over that prevailing wage costs the taxpayers more. But they ignored the legislative auditor’s conclusion that this claim is not true. The best studies with the highest level of credibility “found prevailing wage laws do not have a statistically significant impact on overall construction costs.” Opponents also ignore other key benefits of paying prevailing wage, including higher levels of worker productivity, safety, and training.

Worker productivity has a huge impact on project costs. A wage rate tells you how much you’ll pay per hour. It doesn’t tell you how many hours you’ll pay for. Because prevailing wage recognizes the value of a highly skilled and productive workforce, taxpayers get more for their money. Prevailing wage helps the State hire contractors who get the project done right the first time, avoiding unanticipated costs and delays. What seems like the cheapest labor upfront has proven not to be the best deal in the long run.

Prevailing wage also promotes the worker training programs that support higher levels of productivity. In states with prevailing wage requirements, like Ohio, enrollment in apprenticeship training programs is 82% higher than states without prevailing wage requirements. In the prevailing rate states, the graduation rate for apprentices is twice as high as those states without prevailing wage.

States that have prevailing wage enjoy other benefits that are not so obvious. For example, injury rates on construction sites have risen as much as 14% in states that repealed their prevailing wage laws. In those same states, 79% of construction workers lost access to health insurance once prevailing wage was abolished.

Investing in Ohio’s infrastructure is an investment in Ohio’s economy. Prevailing wage strengthens that investment by strengthening our local employers, and improving our workforce. It does all this while providing the accountability that makes sure taxpayers get the best results for their money.

The policy of prevailing wage puts a huge responsibility on the “Union Workers” and Contractors. In an environment where pressure is on the Politicians to repeal prevailing wages, WE must show everyone that we are a “highly skilled and productive workforce”, we have been trained to be the best, and we get paid prevailing wages because we are the best. No one can do it quicker, safer, and better than the Union Workers. Just remember, this policy is only as good as the quality of the workers being paid these wages.

If a man does only what is required of him, he is a slave. If a man does more than what is required of him, he is a free man.

Scioto Co. JVS Work To Finish This Month

What a beautiful JVS Campus we have here, in Scioto County. Not only has the facility taken on a whole new look, but it contains some of the most up to date technology available to school districts today. Things have certainly come a long way since the Spring of 2007. The District expects to occupy the Taylor Building this month. Mike Snipes and Dave Nichols are wrapping up the loose ends on this project. This project continues to be injury free.

SSU's University Center Project Progresses

The new addition on the South side of the university center is dried in now, and finishes are being completed inside. The new South addition contains a new Kitchen and Dining area on the lower level, and offices and a large "Big Event Room" that can be divided into two meeting rooms. Permanent power has been established for over a month now, and things are headed to a July 16, 2009 completion on the new addition. We have had a great group of men working on this project. Led by Danny Beekman, this project has the following men: Ed Sommer, John Hill, Josh Blevins, Mark Spriggs, Danny Maple, Kenny Stewart, Tim Literal, Bill Mershon, Will Mershon, and T.J. Lawson. As of this date, there have been no serious injuries reported on this project.

June & July Birthdays

June: Bill Mershon, John Hill, Mike Snipes, Nelson Duncan, Blake Darst, & Chad Hawes.

July: Mike Cantrell, Tim Jenkins, Nick Kingrey, Jason Cole, & Jack Gay

If at first you don't succeed, don't try skydiving.

A.P. Green To Upgrade Electric Services

Bill Mershon and Will Mershon will begin an Electric Service upgrade at the A.P. Green Refractories Facility in Oak Hill, Ohio; on June 15, 2009. We are always grateful for the opportunity to work with the folks at A.P. Green. Our own Ed Messer is the Maintenance Supervisor at this facility. This project should wrap up by the end of the month.

ACP PROJECT MANS - UP ONCE AGAIN

Task Order work on the ACP Project in Piketon has started back up, and we have hired back our site office staff; as well as many of our Electrical workers. Some of the other work has been slow to start. We are hopeful that the work will continue to flow our way. Pete has called calling back many of our layed off workers, and hired some new workers as well. As of this date, we have 30 - workers and office staff on site. Led by Pete Nichols, those workers include: Mike Cantrell, Chad Hawes, Brian Maple, Will Collier, Nick Kingrey, Greg Tingler, Tucker Smalley, Chris Shope, Dave Sams, Tim Jenkins, Blake Darst, Nelson Duncan, Barry Fyffe, Mike Gay, Gary Globle, Tim Keyser, Matt Louanglath, Chad Roberts, Scott Wilbanks, Bud Thacker, Dustin Brown, Bill Cole, Kenny Dyer, Jesse Bowen, Terry Fite, Mark Crabtree, Carole Martin, and Laura Hawes.

Bills travel through the mail at twice the speed of checks.

Service Work And Small Jobs

Service calls and small jobs have kept Dwane Johnson very busy this Spring. He has performed small jobs for Shawnee Lodge, Ohio University in Ironton, IMHA of Ironton, Riverview Retirement Center, Rumpke Transfer Station, Northwest Local Schools, The City of Portsmouth, the Village of New Boston, Rubyville Community Church, Wheelersburg United Methodist Church, Scioto County Commissioners, and many others. Dwane also continues to complete punchlist and warranty work on different projects. He does a great job at keeping the customers happy, and we really appreciate that!

PHS Athletic Complex Is Lookin' Good

The new Portsmouth Athletic Complex is really starting to look good. Exterior finishes on the Fieldhouse and Ticket Sales Hut are nearly completed. The main gateway entrance on the East side of the complex looks great. Those in charge have managed to incorporate some of Portsmouth's history into this facility, and they have done a great job. The Fieldhouse is dried in and painting inside is nearly completed. Our Electricians have installed most of the Electrical equipment, conduit, and wiring inside. We have completed the Electrical work on the East side of the Football Field, and are concentrating on everything to the West; towards the Varsity Baseball Field. The turf is down, and the lighting towers are up. Painting on the old H.S. Gymnasium has begun, and will blend-in nicely with the rest of the complex. Things will be coming together very quickly from here on out. Parts of the facility will be turned over to the School District next month, so everyone is going at it as hard as they can. Weather continues to be a problem, but the site handles the water better each day. Andy Eldridge and his crew have been doing a great job on this project. Plans call for the Football Field and Fieldhouse / Concession building to be ready by this August, in time for Portsmouth's first home game. The first home game will be against the West Portsmouth Siders. Expect this place to be packed and a rockin'. This will definitely change the look and sounds of Downtown Portsmouth. Andy's crew consist of the following workers: Mike Hunt, Ed Nichols, Rod Hensley, and Mike Cross. There have been no injuries turned in on this project to date. Keep up the great work!

SOMC Contracts Completed

What started in the dirt two years ago, has turned into a state of the art Medical Facility in Portsmouth. Not only has SOMC taken on a whole new look, the improvements have allowed SOMC to handle more patients in a whole new way. In addition to the improved Emergency and Surgery Departments, Heart Care has been better than expected. Bill Mershon and his crews did a great job pulling all of this together in such a short time. It was very stressful at times, but we like to think of it as a learning opportunity. Miles Lee Ferguson and Dustin Pendleton have been finishing up the loose ends and punchlist items. We really do appreciate the opportunity to have been a part of these great improvements to SOMC.

Vacation begins when Dad says, "I know a short cut."

Changing Of The Guard...

Last Month, Lonnie Ervin, Business Manager of IBEW Local 575, retired from his position with Local 575. It has been a pleasure working with Lonnie over the years. We want to wish Lonnie a long and prosperous retirement. Austin Keyser has been appointed as the new Business Manager. We wish Austin the best of luck in his new position. He has some big shoes to fill.

An Electrician attended to a short circuit at the neurosurgeon's house. After a five minute job, the Electrician demanded \$150.00.

The neurosurgeon exclaimed, "I don't charge this amount even though I am a surgeon."

The Electrician replied, "I didn't either, when I was a surgeon. That's why I became an Electrician."

Rubyville Community Church Builds New Worship Center

We were contacted by the good folks of Rubyville Community Church in March, and asked to help them with the Electrical installation in their new building. We are very excited to have the opportunity to be a part of this great project. Dwane Johnson, with the help of some Church Volunteers, started the Electrical installation on this project. But for the last two months, Miles Lee Ferguson and Dustin Pendleton have spent most of their time roughing in the Electrical. There is already an indescribable feeling in this place, and it seems to be getting stronger each day. If you want to know what I mean, just stop by and see for yourself. As a matter of fact, plan on being there for their first service in the new Sanctuary. We're not sure when that will be, but I will let you know. Stay tuned!!

Congratulations To The Graduating Apprentices

We want to congratulate the Graduating Class of 2009. After completing five grueling years of classroom and on the job training, these young men are ready to take on the Electrical Industry as fully trained Journeyman Electricians. The graduates are: Brent D. Bostick, Jeffery A. Brown, Randall Wesley Cline, Jacob T. Dixon, Lowell Kinney Jr., Brian Scott Knapp, Jotham Lee Parker, Gregory K. Schrader, Greg Shirey II, and David R. Wickersham.

What we've bid, and will be bidding...

- We were the low bidder on the Electrical package for the Nile Township Fire Station to be built on US Route 52, West of State Route 125; adjacent to the Nile Township Community Center. We are waiting on this project to be awarded. We've been told the trustees are waiting for the stimulus money.
 - Infra Metals still plans on building a new Steel Distribution Facility, in the area behind the former Wal-Mart Shopping Center; in New Boston, Ohio. We have been working with our friends at J & H Erectors as part of this design-build team. Infra Metals is planning construction, sometime this year.
 - We rebid the electrical on a Plaza Renovations Project at SSU. We've been told the alternates that SSU will be taking, makes West End the low bidder. Currently, we are waiting on a contract.
 - We were the unsuccessful bidder on the Security System Upgrade Project at the Ohio River Valley Juvenile Detention Center in Franklin Furnace. The low bidder was Accurate Electric.
 - We recently turned in a bid on the new KDMC Data Center in Ashland, Ky. This was a private opening. It's our understanding that our friends at Jordan Smith will be doing the Electrical on this one.
 - We are expecting plans anytime now, for several new office suites being built at SOMC.
 - We sent for the site package plans for the new K-12 School facility, for Clay Local School District. There is a small amount of Electrical demolition on this phase of the project. The site package bids June 10, 2009. Plans for the new building are due out in a few months.
 - We are watching for plans for a new K-12 School facility, for New Boston Local School District.
 - We will be bidding the Electrical on a Fish Hatchery Renovation Project in Pike County, on June 11, 2009.
 - We will be bidding the Electrical on a new Highway Patrol Post building in South Point, later this month.
 - We will be bidding the electrical package for Washington-Nile's new Middle School. Bids for the new Middle School facility should be out around July or August of this year.
 - We are looking forward to plans for Renovations of the SOMC Cafeteria and Kitchen areas, due out any time now.
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