CLEVELAND BUILDING TRADES QUARTERLY CONNECTION

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PLAs benefit both private, public projects

It is a question asked all too often – "Why can't the government run efficiently? … Like a business."

As municipal budgets continue to tighten, decision-makers must determine the most efficient way to spend tax dollars.

When it comes to construction projects, one of the proven ways to finish on time and on budget is to employ a Project Labor Agreement (PLA).

A PLA is an agreement between the project owner and local construction trade unions that provide for the hiring of qualified construction workers and guarantees labor stability on the project.

Matthew A. Szollosi is the Executive Director of Affiliated Construction Trades of Ohio (ACT Ohio), a non-profit that advocates for safe construction by qualified contractors and skilled craftsmen, as well as level competition to ensure the state's tax dollars are spent properly.

Szollosi and David Wondolowski, Executive Secretary of the Cleveland Building and Construction Trades Council, authored an op-ed article that appeared in The Plain Dealer on Sept. 9. The article highlighted the benefits PLAs can provide Northeast Ohio Communities.

These agreements are frequently utilized in both the private and public sectors. The

Wondolowski

Szollosi

list of companies that use PLAs include Honda of America Manufacturing, Eaton Corp., Cleveland Clinic, MetroHealth Systems, LTV Steel, University Hospitals, General Motors, British Petroleum, FirstEnergy,

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CBCTC partners with new Max Hayes High School

The Cleveland Building and Construction Trades Council have taken an active role at the new Max S. Hayes Career and Technical High School in Cleveland.

When the new $48 million dollar vocational school opened in August, it became the first high school in Ohio to include a pre-apprenticeship program linked to the local construction trades.

Students in the school's construction trades track are introduced to a number of crafts within the building trades and those interested can enter directly into an apprenticeship in their chosen field upon graduation.

"Not only will the students learn some of the basic skills of each of our crafts but they will learn about our history," said Cleveland Building Trades Executive Secretary Dave Wondolowski.

"Upon graduation, they will be better prepared … than if they had been put through a typical college preparatory curriculum."

PHOTO: MATT JAWORSKI/QUARTERLY CONNECTION

A look at the exposed wiring, piping and ventilation found in the hallways in Max Hayes High School.

The new school is on West 65th Street, just south of I-90, and can hold up to 800 students. The interior is painted bright colors and large bays adorn the building, allowing for automobiles, heavy equipment and materials to be brought into the

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We are the Cleveland Building and Construction Trades Council

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American Electric Power, Proctor & Gamble, Ford Motor Co., Key Bank and a number of other Ohio businesses.

In a business age where the bottom line is the most important aspect, corporate decision makers must make the most cost effective decisions – especially when it comes to construction. The overall value within a PLA makes it extremely attractive to business.

Government leaders should consider this same approach when discussing their next major construction project.

Wondolowski and Szollosi point out that by, "guaranteeing no strikes and no lockouts, standardizing work schedules and payment arrangements, providing dispute resolution procedures, and assuring contractors have ready access to licensed, highly-skilled construction workers, PLAs help both public-sector and private-sector project owners meet their goals for their construction projects."

This past year, legislation on the state level that proposed prohibiting public entities from using PLAs was widely defeated with bi-partisan support. The reason for this is that most lawmakers in Columbus understand the importance of PLAs and the benefits they offer – especially on complex, difficult or tight time-lined projects.

"Public-sector PLAs are not mandatory, nor do they prohibit non-union contractors from bidding on taxpayer-funded projects," wrote Szollosi and Wondolowski. "Such a prohibition would violate Ohio's competitive bid laws. However, PLAs are essential management tools that, on specific projects, further the taxpayers' interest in acquiring the best possible construction services at the lowest possible price."

An excellent example of the need and value for a PLA is the Cuyahoga County Convention Center Hotel. The $272 million project is being built on a tight timeline with little room for error. By using a PLA, which eliminates delays and strikes and consolidates dozen of collective bargaining agreements into one, Cuyahoga County's Executive and Council helped to ensure the hotel will be ready for the Republican National Convention in July 2016.

More information on the benefits of Project Labor Agreements can be found on the ACT Ohio and Cleveland Building Trades' websites: www.actohio.org and www.cbctc.org.

Max Hayes

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wide-open teaching areas.

Unlike most new schools Max Hayes has exposed piping, wiring and HVAC systems, which are used as learning tools to teach students about various aspects of construction.

Inside the spacious instructional bays, students will learn how to use new equipment commonly found on jobsites and new material.

"We have asked our contractor partners to donate new materials on a consistent basis so that the students don't always have to reuse things," Wondolowski said.

New equipment, materials, spacious work bays and exposed parts of the building will go a long way in helping the instructors, including some from the Cleveland Building Trades, prepare the students for real world careers that also provide a livable wage.