



RI 21st Century Labor Management Partnership

What is the Truth on PLAs?

The following is a follow up to our testimony before the Study Committee researching the feasibility of a PLA for construction of the Kent County courthouse.

At the Committee's hearing, we testified that our unmatched investment in training produces a workforce that works safer, and we cited specific evidence to substantiate our claim. We just came across new information that further illustrates this important point. According to a recent article in the BNA Construction Labor Report, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration recently issued citations and proposed fines totaling \$89,000 to a nonunion contractor in Rhode Island as a result of an investigation into a recent workplace fatality of an employee of the contractor.

According to the article, a contributing factor in the worker's death was because the contractor ***“had not trained the workers to recognize”*** the safety hazards of the hazardous work he was involved in.¹ [Emphasis added.] This unfortunate accident further illustrates that safety cannot be taken for granted and that proper training is essential to insuring that workers work safe. The unions of the building trades commitment to safety is unmatched and the evidence demonstrates that utilizing their workers is will insure that your project will be completed as safe as possible.

Next, while we did not view a copy of their presentation at the hearing, the Associated Builders & Contractors made several representations about cost overruns of PLAs in jurisdictions outside Rhode Island that new information confirms is not true and therefore warrants a response. The enclosed documentation tells a different story about several projects mentioned at the hearing. According to the owners of the following projects that implemented PLAs, their projects were completed timely and within budget. For example: a) the Pacific Bell Baseball Park in San Francisco, CA was finished on the and on budget; b) the City South Glens Falls, NY School District's project was completed “on budget”, and c) the City of Buffalo, NY's school department utilized a PLA for one its projects and as a consequence its superintendent is now “converted supporter” of the agreements. (Please see enclosures to substantiate these claims.) This information is in direct contradiction to information presented at the hearing. Additionally, it is reliable because it comes from the construction user.

Therefore, whether in Rhode Island or in other jurisdictions, the record is clear that construction users utilize PLAs for a reason: they work, otherwise construction users

¹ *OSHA Fines Contractor \$89,000 After Fatality*, BNA CONSTRUCTION LABOR REPORT, Vol. 49, No. 2437, August 13, 2003 at page 815.

would not implement them and this issue would have been debated and concluded sometime ago.