

Issues/Programs Report

Second Quarter 2015

Main Focuses:

**Firefighters Frustrated with Mon Power Response Times,
Prevailing Wage Controversy, Upshur County Tornado,
Minimum Wage & Apartment Costs in WV**

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The licensee of station, WDTV, has determined that the issues listed here were of importance to the community during the past three months, and have aired the following programs to address those issues, during the fourth quarter, dated April 1, 2015 through June 30, 2015.

Issue #1: Firefighters Frustrated with Mon Power Response Times

Date(s)/Time(s) Aired: 6/23-6/25.

5 PM, 6 PM, 11 PM, Daybreak, and Midday shows for approximately 2-3 minutes each on all dates indicated above.

Story:

Officials still don't know what caused a fire that destroyed a home along Pleasant Valley Road in Fairmont on 6/23 or the name or condition of a man who was flown to West Penn Burn Center.

But, there was a live, sparking wire on the ground while crews were fighting the blaze, and officials who were on scene say they're frustrated with Mon Power's response time.

Barry Bledsoe of the Marion County Fire Association sent us video of an electrical wire at the scene that was sparking and still live for an extended period of time. He says that while Mon Power used to respond in a timely manner to cut power, response times have been delayed up to 2 hours in recent years. He says situations like these put firefighters in jeopardy.

"When the fire departments showed up we had a house [fire] that was fully involved, and there was a live power line that was stretched across the road and into the yard, that was still arcing, and it stayed that way for 30-40 minutes after the fire department got on scene. We had another delay in getting the power company here to shut off the power to that live line."

Bledsoe says that live wires at a fire are not only dangerous for firefighters,

but they take manpower away from the real issue at hand.

"When we have a live line down, the first thing we have to do is take firefighters away from fire fighting and station them near that line so somebody doesn't step on it and get hurt or killed."

Todd Meyers of Mon Power says the cause for the delay was due to two simultaneous fires that night.

"What happened in this particular case, and it's a pretty rare instance. They were actually called to a different structure fire down in the Flemington area of Taylor County around 7:50 p.m. So, they were down there on another fire when that call came into them at about 9:40 p.m."

Bledsoe, however, says this has been happening frequently as of late.

Issue #2: Prevailing Wage Controversy

Date(s)/Time(s) Aired: 6/26-6/28

5 PM, 6 PM, 11 PM, Daybreak, and Midday shows for approximately 2-3 minutes each, each day in the date range indicated above.

Story:

West Virginia now joins 18 other states that do not have a prevailing wage law. This comes after Workforce West Virginia could not calculate the rate by the new July 1st deadline.

Earlier this month, a republican-led legislative committee voted against a deadline extension to September 30 for a new prevailing wage rate.

"The economic departments of WVU and Marshall was charged with putting together the documents that would determine the future for prevailing wage, well that was done, and obviously the new majority wasn't happy with the

results so they rejected the report," said Mike Caputo, Minority Whip of the West Virginia House of Delegates.

Republicans said the Democratic Administration's calculations were incomplete and illegal, but now a fear will become reality for several West Virginians in the construction business.

"The influx of out-of-state contractors coming in and 'lowballing' these projects, I don't see how that's advantageous to any West Virginia worker, and like I said, our guys aren't trying to 'enrich' themselves, these people are just trying to survive and provide for their families, and in my opinion they are being attacked," said Jason Griffith, Business Manager at Plumbers & Pipefitters UA Local Union No. 152.

Issue #3: Upshur County Tornado

Date(s)/Time(s) Aired: 6/17-6/25

5 PM, 6 PM, 11 PM, Daybreak, and Midday shows for approximately 1-3 minutes each.

Story:

The National Weather Service has confirmed that a tornado touched down on 6/17 in Upshur County, just outside of Buckhannon in Queens.

Viewers contacted the 5 Newsroom saying that a tornado had done some damage to roofs, trees, and a garage. Meteorologists from the National Weather Service came out to the scene 6/18 to assess the storm damage and confirmed that a tornado did touch down.

5 News had a chance to talk to some of the people who live in the area who experienced the storm last night and asked them what their reactions were and exactly what happened.

“I'm scared to death. I didn't know what to expect, all the way up the road, I didn't really know what to expect,” says Phyllis Tenney.

“It was pretty shocking, I mean you know there's a possibility at any time, anywhere, but praise God the family is alright,” says Ginny Herron.

5 News asked residents exactly what the tornado took down in its wake.

“It took our porch clear off the house,” explains Herron. “Part of it's laying in our backyard, it tore up the roofing pretty bad, it's covered up right now just to keep the weather out. But, it split our trees wide open, we had one in the backyard, the only thing it [tornado] left was the trunk of it and the limbs are just, in every direction.”

“Several trees were blown in the road, access was unavailable, except through the field,” adds Tenney. “The car port was upset and dumped out in the field, the barn roof was gone, and the dog pen was completely torn down.”

Herron says that her husband was the first person to spot the tornado, and after that they took cover.

“Around 7 o'clock last night my husband was in the house, and the porch roof came up and then it came back down. We had two neighbors that were walking, that took cover up the road a little ways and they said they saw stuff circulating in the sky.”

A neighbor's garage down the street was torn down by the tornado.

Thankfully no one was injured, but Herron says a few pets did not make it to safety.

“My neighbor actually lost a dog last night, it was crushed by a tree and later died. They also just found one, within the last hour, and took it to the vet and it has two broken legs. She has two little kids that are pretty upset about that.”

Tenney says that everyone is helping to put the neighborhood back together.

“Thank the neighbors,” says Tenney. “They were all fantastic, everybody came and checked on me and called. A lot of them came last night and tried to help in any way they could.”

Residents say the next step is to finish cleaning up the debris in the yards and the river. Some residents have insurance agents coming out to assess the monetary damages to their homes, although most of them said, luckily, not much structural damage was done to the actual house.

Issue #4: Minimum Wage & Apartment Costs in WV

Date(s)/Time(s) Aired: 6/16-6/17

5 PM, 11 PM, Daybreak, and Midday shows for approximately 2-3 minutes each.

Story:

For many Americans, working a minimum wage job became a necessity after the recession.

While for some, that job might not be permanent, for others, it is their career.

Regardless, the federal minimum wage just isn't enough to afford the rent for a one-bedroom apartment in any state in the nation.

In The Mountain State, Monongalia County is among the most expensive counties for apartment rentals.

A resident living in the Morgantown area would need to average \$14.46 per hour to pay for a one-bedroom apartment.

Residents in Jefferson County, however, have it a little harder. They would

need to make \$16.42 an hour, according to the National Low Income Housing Coalition.

Experts say there is a reason rent is so high, and it's all supply and demand.

In our area, we see a lot of college students and Oil and Gas employees.

The more there are living here, the more demand there is for housing, which increases the rent.

"It's a matter of supply and demand," said Brian Lego of the Bureau of Business and Economic Research at West Virginia University. "It's a very generic reference for an economist to make, but it really is the case that the supply is not meeting the demand."

While many people say increasing the minimum wage would help people afford the rent, experts say while it could help in some aspects, that could actually increase rent costs, as housing and apartment leasing companies would have to pay employees more.

"I think there is the case when you look at raising the minimum wage and it's affects on the cost of housing and other items," Lego added. "That's certainly going to be the case, that you would have some kind of impact there."