



The UNION ECHO

**Serving the workers of Northern
and North-western Ontario**



Volume 16 Issue 1

Unity and Strength for workers

Summer 2014



PRESIDENT'S CORNER NEW UNITS JOIN OUR LOCAL: WELCOME TO ALL NEW MEMBERS!

Since our last newsletter a lot has happened in the local, most of which you can get a good flavor of in the representatives' reports. On your behalf, I want to welcome new members from the Ontario Lottery Gaming Corporation (OLG) (the Casino and Clerical workers in Thunder Bay), Kiashe Economic Development Corporation (KEDC), Dallan Forestry and Kiezebrink Contracting who joined our local.

The 200 casino workers from Thunder Bay joined our local as the Ontario Government intends to sell all its casinos in

Ontario. United Steelworkers unionized the Thunder Bay, Sault Saint Marie and Georgia Downs site. These Casino workers decided to join a union as their working conditions were all in danger of being lost and would all have to be reinstated with a new employer.

At this point in the negotiating process we have 4 days of negotiation done. Most of the language is completed and reflects the other unionized casinos. The challenge will be the wages and benefits, as OLG has a directive from the province for zero increases. If nothing changes on their side,

we will be at an impasse very quickly as the casino workers in Thunder Bay have not seen an increase in 7 years. Other OLG casinos got increases in previous years because they were unionized.

We are scheduled for 3 days in June and monetary issues will be addressed. The Conciliation officer will be needed as the employer is maintaining zero increases. We are seeking wage adjustments as we are lagging behind other casinos and a 3% per year. As mentioned, we will have no choice but to apply for mediation if the employer does nothing for

monetary increases. We will have to report back to our OLG members and get a directive on how they want to proceed. I hope that in our next newsletter we will have a new Collective Agreement to report with increases for our new members at OLG in Thunder Bay.

In closing I want to wish you a safe and beautiful summer Holidays. Enjoy it as you have surely deserved it!

In Solidarity;
Guy Bourgouin
President

THE WSIB AND YOU

DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

What is the Duty to Co-operate?

In order to receive benefits from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), you must satisfy certain obligations to co-operate. If the WSIB decides that you are not co-operating as required, and that you do not

have a legitimate reason for doing so, it may reduce or suspend your benefits and services until you do co-operate.

What Are Your Co-operation Obligations?

Under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, you are obliged to co-operate in the following ways:

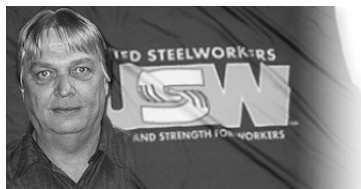
- providing the WSIB with any information it requires to adjudicate your claim
- giving written consent to the release of

functional abilities information by your treating health professional to your employer when filing your claim (See OWA Information Sheet, "Filing a Claim").

- keeping in contact with your employer throughout the period of your recovery or disability
- helping your employer to identify work that is suitable, available, within your functional abilities and, where possible, that restores your pre-injury earnings
- providing the WSIB with any information it requests about your return to work

- co-operating in all aspects of a labour market re-entry assessment or plan
- co-operating in the health care and treatment prescribed by your treating health professional and approved by the WSIB
- attending a medical examination at the request of the WSIB or your treating health professional, or an employer-requested health examination that the WSIB has directed you to attend (for information on objecting to an employer-requested medical examination. See OWA Information Sheet, Employer-Requested Health

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GROWTH IN WESTERN REGION OF OUR LOCAL

Resolute

We continue to have issues/grievances at this operation on an ongoing basis. Settle one, here comes another. Arbitrations are scheduled regarding seniority rights involving the Marcri and Renewable Forest Products crews. Also, a discipline case involving both of the same companies and the termination of a Resolute/Marcri employee.

Plans are underway for the resumption of operations this fall at the Ignace Sawmill which will include the restart of logging operations. As a result of a previous grievance settlement, 10 members should be returning to work at Ignace later in the year after being displaced from their home base for about 3 years. Work has been steady for the woodlands operations throughout the long cold

Woodlands

winter. There are currently 10 contractors employing over 400 members working in the woodlands supplying the 2 Resolute mills in Thunder Bay. The Collective Agreement expires at the end of October. During this round of bargaining, we expect to make significant gains at the bargaining table.

Lumberyards

Negotiations were scheduled but then delayed by the illness of an employer; we expect to meet in June to renew the Wanson Lumber and North American Lumber agreements.

Thunder Bay OLG Casino

This 200 member unit was certified with us in December. There has been several membership meetings and the election of a bargaining committee, to which training was provided. The committee came up with proposals that

will meet the needs of the membership. These were presented to the employer at the end of April over a 4 day bargaining session during which some progress on language issues was made. Talks now move to Sault Ste. Marie OLG, which is also newly certified to the USW. Bro. Bourgouin will observe there and more dates will be scheduled for Thunder Bay soon.

Dallan Forestry L.P.

This is a new bargaining unit certified by voluntary recognition; the Company is related to North American Mill Yard Services with whom we have an agreement at the Resolute Thunder Bay Sawmill. These 25 new members are running mobile equipment at the Resolute Pulp and Paper mill. The new members voted on the Collective Agreement on April

16. It was ratified by 100% of the voting members.

KZEDC

The Kiashke Economic Development Corporation is an entity of the Gull Bay First Nation. They have an overlapping (3rd party) agreement with the MNR and Resolute. Under the terms of the Resolute agreement they must have an agreement with the Union to harvest for Resolute. We have negotiated a Collective Agreement with them which will be voted on by the employees in the near future. Most of the planned harvesting will take place in the Gull Bay area.

I take this opportunity to wish all a pleasant summer. Stay safe

In Solidarity
Bruce Frost



BAD NEWS CONTINUE TO PLAGUE TRUE NORTH NEW AGREEMENTS FOR EASTERN UNITS

Our members at the Centre de Santé of Greater Sudbury ratified at 63% last March a new 1 year collective agreement that brings a wage increase of 2%, increases from 10% to 14% for in lieu of benefits for members working on a temporary basis, also an increase in their days for leave for bereavement and this just

to name a few. We will once again later this year be meeting with the membership there to take demands for the next round of negotiations that should take place early in the next year.

As for our members working in the woodlands operation in Iroquois Falls for Resolute

Forest Products, this winter has been a very good one. Harvesting volumes were better than expected. The membership there will also be meeting sometime later this summer/early fall to take demands for upcoming negotiations that should take place later this year as their collective agreement ends on

November 30th of this year.

As for the membership from the Tembec Opasatika woodlands operation, they ratified at 80% last November a new 6 year collective agreement. This new agreement brings an increase of \$10.00 to premiums for vacation time off taken,
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NEW COLLECTIVE AGREEMENTS FOR NON-TRADITIONAL UNITS

A new agreement was reached on March 21st, 2014 with Aramark at the Notre Dame Hospital in Hearst. The housekeepers have ratified the Agreement at 86% on March 30th. This is a 3 year agreement with increases in the wages (30 cents per year), the massage therapy, the pay in lieu for part-time employees, the bereavement pay, the shift premium and the vacation with pay.

A tentative agreement was reached at Hearst Farmers Coop (Hardware store in Hearst) on March 19th, 2014. This 5 year agreement contains increases in the wages, in the profit sharing for the employees and a new

clause for the volunteer firefighters to be paid when leaving for a fire. This agreement has not been ratified so far because of scheduling issues but we will be meeting shortly with the members for them to vote on it.

An agreement was reached and ratified by the members at Le Nord (newspaper in Hearst). The 2 year agreement contains increases of 2% for wages, increase in the vision care, the jury duty, and the Paid Holidays with the addition of the Family Day and also a wage adjustment for one employee of almost 1 dollar.

Negotiations at Maison

Renaissance (Rehab Centre in Hearst) are still ongoing.

Besides the above-mentioned negotiations, all the sawmills are in operation in the central region of our local. The White River sawmill that had started last year has since been operating on 2 shifts. Having started the operations only last year this mill is still struggling a bit moneywise because of the startup costs of the plant. The Olav Haavaldsrud sawmill in Hornepayne has been running on 2 shifts for a while now. The Company is still struggling there too moneywise because of the recession that we are still trying to get out of. But with the Co-Gen that has started

operations, we believe that the sawmill has a brighter future ahead.

In the Hearst region, while sawmills and the Plywood Plant are operating on regular shifts, beside some road construction here and there and a little bit of hauling, most of the woodlands operations employees are not working right now due to seasonal layoffs. Startup is scheduled as early as June or early July in some cases.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a great summer.

In Solidarity
Jacques Jean

UNDERSTANDING THE RIGHT TO REFUSE UNSAFE WORK

According to Section 43 of Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act (the Act)*, workers can refuse work they have reason to believe is likely to endanger their immediate or long-term health or that of another worker. In this initial phase of a work refusal, reason to believe is an honest, personal feeling by the refusing worker. Some workers, including police officers, firefighters, teachers and health care workers have restrictions on their right to refuse.

Reporting a refusal

The refusing worker

immediately notifies their supervisor they are refusing unsafe work according to Section 43 of *the Act*.

Investigating a refusal

The supervisor must investigate the situation immediately in the presence of the worker and a worker representative. During the investigation, the refusing worker cannot be reassigned other work. If resolved, the worker returns to work.

Reasonable grounds for continued refusal

If the worker feels she/he has reasonable grounds to refuse,

a Ministry of Labour inspector must be notified.

Ministry of Labour inspector involvement

The inspector investigates in consultation with the worker, supervisor and worker representative. The inspector provides a written decision to the worker, employer and worker representative. This decision will either order remedial action or deem the work to be safe. Pending investigation and decision, the worker can be assigned reasonable alternative work. No other worker can be assigned the work unless, in the presence of a worker representative, they are informed of the refusal and

the specific reasons.

Appealing MOL inspector orders

The worker, worker representative or the employer can appeal the inspector's order(s) or decision not to issue an order to the Ontario Labour Relations Board within 30 days (*the Act*, Section 61).

No reprisals

It is against the law for a worker to be punished for refusing work they believe to be unsafe (*the Act*, Section 50).

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WSIB and you... from page 1

Examinations.

- reporting any material change in circumstances to the WSIB within 10 days of the change occurring. See OWA Information Sheet, Material Change in Circumstances.

How Will You Know if the WSIB Thinks You Are Not Co-operating?

If the WSIB thinks that you are not co-operating, it is supposed to remind you of your obligation to co-operate and what will happen to your benefits if you fail to co-operate. If you continue not to co-operate without giving WSIB a reasonable explanation

for your actions, the WSIB may reduce or suspend your benefits or services until you do co-operate.

If You Start To Co-operate Again, Will the WSIB Pay You the Benefits You Missed?

No. The WSIB will not pay you benefits for periods where they were reduced or suspended because you were not co-operating. The WSIB will only restore the benefits you missed if it failed to tell you about your obligations to co-operate and what would happen to your benefits and services if you did not co-operate, or if it was

mistaken in finding that you were not co-operating.

What if You Have a Legitimate Reason for Not Co-operating?

The WSIB will not reduce or suspend your benefits where you have a legitimate reason for not co-operating. An example of this might be an unexpected illness or accident, a death in the family, or severe weather conditions that prevent you from attending a scheduled appointment. Where you have a legitimate reason for failing to meet an obligation, notify the WSIB as soon as possible.



Happy summer vacation to all our members!



Eric Carroll... from page 2

increases from \$400.00 to \$480.00 in 2013, \$485.00 in 2014, \$490.00 in 2015, and \$495.00 in 2016 for tool allowance, also increases in allowances for safety apparel, increases in the bridging supplement, and a wage increase of 6.5% over the 6 year term with a signing bonus of \$1500.00 lump sum.

As for the truckers, also under the Tembec Opasatika woodlands operation, they also ratified at 78% last December a new 5 year agreement. This new agreement brings increases of 20% for the reimbursement of truck permits; it also brings increases for the reimbursement of safety apparel by \$25.00, plus

increases of \$1.75 to the trucker's rate over the term of the agreement.

And finally, as reported in our last edition, times are still very difficult for our members at the True North plywood plant out in Cochrane. Members there have once again been laid off since last November and the plant has been placed under Notice of Intent "NOI". This means that if they do not find someone to purchase the plant by the deadline date of May 20, the Company will then be placed under the CCAA, which means that the Company will then have filed for bankruptcy. Our concerns are that once under CCAA the chances of re-opening

the plant will be very challenging and that we can expect that auctioneers will get in there to sell the equipment. We are still working hard with union officials as well as government officials to try and get some kind of help from them. But this will be very difficult at this time seeing that we are heading to the poles this June and that parliament is now closed until then.

At this time, I would like to wish everyone a great summer and hope that we all get the chance to enjoy time off with all our loved ones.

In Solidarity,
Eric Carroll