



The UNION ECHO

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Serving the workers of Northern Ontario



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In Union find strength

Winter 2009

THE PRESIDENT'S CORNER WE MUST RETURN TO THE ROOTS OF UNIONISM!

As we all know these are not good times for most of our membership. A lot of them have had to take serious concessions to keep their plant running and remain at work. It is sad that it's always the workers that have to bear the brunt of the economic downturns and bail out some of our employers while the government sits on the sideline and watches the dust settle.

The members struggle to keep what they have worked hard all their lives to build, such as a home for their family, savings for their children's education, a good pension, etc. Some employers are genuinely affected by such downturns and they will struggle along with their workers in order to survive the day. Others will see this as an opportunity to demand concessions

from their employees in order to retain their profit margins. Often times the governments that we have elected to protect our interests will side with these companies, as in the case of the auto industry where the governments demanded that the companies reduce their wage and benefit packages as a pre-condition for the bail-outs, even though the wages represent only about 7% of the price of a new car. It is one thing to help struggling companies, it is another to subsidize mismanagement through corporate welfare and wages rollbacks. It is our lifetimes of sweat and toil that generate corporate profits and shareholder dividends; it is only just that they should sweat along with us through these difficult times.

I strongly believe that the

worst is behind us and we will see better days soon, but we have to realize that the industry will never be the same and we need to adapt and be united to face these changes together. More than ever it is time as a union to reflect on our slogan **SOLIDARITY FOREVER**, it has to be more than just a catchy phrase - it has to become a way of thinking and acting. We, as union members, will have to eliminate the 'me, myself and I' attitude of recent years and return to the roots of what created the Unions; that is, taking care of our brothers and sisters. If we can achieve this, we can hope for a brighter future for all. It is the Union movement of the 1920's and 30's that took the world out of the great depression, let's stand together and repeat history.



Guy Bourgouin, President

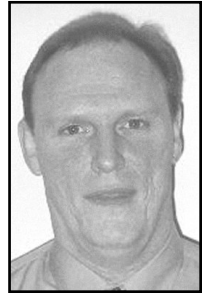
The Holidays are a time to enjoy with our families, reflect on our condition, and be thankful that we can still celebrate together. God knows that our membership deserves this precious respite now more than ever. On my behalf and from the Local I want to wish you and your family the best of times during the holiday season and please play safe.

In solidarity;
Guy Bourgouin



The executive and staff of your local wish you a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year.

LAY-OFFS IN HEARST & HORNEPAYNE CO-GEN PLANT IN HORNEPAYNE MAY SAVE THE MILL



Jacques Jean

Olav Haavaldsrud

With the economy struggling, some of our members at Olav Haavaldsrud Timber in Hornepayne have been on lay-off with only 1 shift operating at the mill for quite some time. The woodland operations also have been affected. The mill has shut down completely on November 20th with a recall date set for early February, if the company can sell their jackpine chips. However, there are good news for them since a co-generation plant will be up and running within the next 24 months, creating new jobs and delivering power to the sawmill. This will lower operation costs for the company and we are hopeful that it will increase their chances for long term survival.

Lecours Lumber

Members at Lecours Lumber sawmill have been out of work since October 9. We do not

know at this point if, and when, they are going to be recalled back to work.

Tembec-Hearst

Again, the Company has shut down operations at the mill, this since November 9 and until the beginning of March, next year. We are hoping that the members will see some stability when they finally start back in the spring. As for the woodland operations, we have learned that they will resume after the Holidays.

Maison Renaissance

Members at Maison Renaissance have ratified a new Collective Agreement on October 21st. The 2 years agreement shows increases in wages, pension plan, percentage in lieu and in shift premium.

Columbia Forest Prods.

Our members at Columbia in

Hearst have been on a roller coaster for many months now; wage rollbacks and freezes, concessions, lay-offs and job closures - they've seen it all. The melamine line was closed on November 20th, putting another 10 or so members out of a job. Following a petition by the members, the committee received a directive to sit with the company and discuss their survival plan for the plywood and u.v. line. At first the company was demanding further wage rollbacks and deep cuts to the benefit package, but the committee held fast and came back with a final proposal that they felt they could present to the membership.

After a tight 54% vote in favour of looking at the company proposals, the members were presented with 2 options that varied only in some minor details. Option #2 was favored at 91% which will see wages

and benefits frozen until May, 2013. If the US mill receives wage increases in 2011 and beyond, the same increases will apply here. A gainshare program will also be installed where employees may receive bonuses of up to 14% of the base salary, based on mill performance. The short-term disability plan was reduced to 55% of base wages until May, 2012. This and other language changes guarantee normal operations until October, 2010 according to the company.

Merry Christmas and a happy New Year to all; it is even more important to celebrate the Holidays in times of hardship.

In solidarity;
Jacques Jean

THE WSIB AND YOU DUTY TO CO-OPERATE

What is the duty to co-operate?

In order to receive benefits from the 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 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;
- 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;
- reporting any material change in circumstances to the WSIB within 10 days of the change occurring.

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 of what will happen to your benefits if you fail to co-operate. If you continue to not co-operate without giving the WSIB a reasonable explanation for your actions, the WSIB may reduce or suspend your benefits or services until you do co-operate.

Brother Guy Bourgoûin is your WSIB advocate; please contact him for help with your case.



**Have a happy and safe Holiday season.
For you sake and your family's, don't drink and drive!**

HARD TIMES AROUND FOR AREA MILLS

CONCESSIONS AND LAY-OFFS ARE THE NAME OF THE GAME

Tembec-Kirkland Lake;

No date of recall has been set, nor has Tembec indicated if they are looking at reopening the Finger Joint plant any time soon.

Tembec-Timmins;

As of the end of February 2010, no employee will have recall rights at the Timmins location.

Domtar Inc.-Timmins;

A new agreement was ratified by a vote of 82% in favour at Domtar - Timmins on September 17, 2009. It is for a two year term, ending August 31, 2011 with only a few changes to existing conditions. As some of you may recall, back in the June of 2008 issue I had outlined some of the concessions that the employees had taken in order to be competitive and maintain their employment. Most of these

concessions have remained in effect with the exception of the boot allowance that will increase to \$125.00, and a 2% wage increase effective October 1, 2009. They also went from a two tiered pension plan system "Flat Benefit Plan" and "Money Purchase Plan" to a three unit Money Purchase Plan of \$105.00 effective Sept. 1st, 2010. Other changes to the language were also agreed to.

Tembec-Chapleau;

The members at Tembec Chapleau have had to take an extra week of shutdown, making it three weeks instead of two, last summer due to a surplus of chips in the yard. They will also be down for one month after Christmas, until the last week of January, again because of a surplus of chips.

As for the Co-Generation plant it has not stopped and, as of

writing these lines, it is still running at full capacity.

Abitibi Bowater-Iroquois Falls;

Subject to ratification, here are the final terms agreed to after we were approached by the Company to negotiate early because they had to put a plan together for the survival of the paper mill in Iroquois Falls

Future operations will be headed by a contractor who will own all equipment and will have to respect all conditions of a new 3 year Collective Agreement ending November 30, 2012. Overtime will be paid after 40 hours of work on harvesting and after 44 hours of work on trucking. Supplementary Vacation with Pay, Vacation bonus \$80.00/week, and Shift differential are deleted and Vacation Pay is reduced by 2% for all employees except for those already at the mini-

m u m allowed by the Employment Standards Act. The travelling/driving time clause was modified and employees will have to pay 25% of the cost for their benefits, with a wage reduction of \$1.00/hour. Furthermore, some modification was made to some of the language. With all these concessions there are no guaranties that the mill will remain part of Abitibi in the future.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all members a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year in these very hard and stressful times.

In solidarity;
Roland Laurin



POOR MARKETS CAUSE COCHRANE LAY-OFFS

SPRUCE FALLS & OPAZ WOODLANDS RESUMING OPERATIONS

Cochrane;

Unfortunately, we have to report that the members at the Tembec-Cochrane sawmill and planing mill are once again without work since the end of November on account of poor market conditions. The Company is telling us that they will be back at work in January 2010. Hopefully these plans will not change and our members will see more stability in the new-year.

the time of this report on account of the Company being in existence for less than one year. We believe that is wrong since both Companies that have merged, Norbord and Kruger, have been in existence for a long time. We are working on our side to get the governments to revise their decision.

Kapuskasing;

The woodlands operation at Spruce Falls in Kapuskasing is finally getting back to work after a lengthy layoff that has seen several of our members retire and some even sever themselves from the Company on account of lack of work. Many of our members are dis-

couraged with the situation of only having worked for 3-4 months this year and are hoping that we are finally seeing the light at the end of the tunnel so that we may be working a lot more in 2010. The same can be said about our members with the Opasatika Woodlands operations.

The office workers at Spruce Falls are also seeing major cuts on account of the Company having to restructure. The Company has been looking at every opportunity where they can reduce costs and survive the hard times. Now, that being said, we believe that cuts are not always done in the appropriate places. And as reported

last edition of the Echo, our members are still waiting for negotiation dates since the i r Collective Agreement has expired in September 2008.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. And let's all hope that the New Year brings us not only love, joy and happiness, but lots of work for all of us.

In solidarity;
Eric Carroll



Also in Cochrane, True North Hardwood Plywood employees are facing layoffs due to poor market conditions. The Company has applied for a work sharing program through HRDC but has been refused at

DELEGATES TO USW INTERNATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY CONFERENCE

Two of our members, namely brother Rock Nadeau from Columbia (woods) and brother Jean Laurin from Domtar Inc.

(Timmins) were sent by the Local to attend the Steelworkers International Health and Safety Conference

in Houston, Texas from August 17th to the 21st. Both members were impressed by the intensity of the workshops and pleased

with the experience, the training, and the information they received during their stay in Houston.

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HOME SAFETY TIPS FOR THE HOLIDAYS

SAFETY FIRST AT WORK AND AT PLAY



If you use a real tree:

- Choose one that is fresh (needles are hard to pull off and do not break when bent).
- Add water daily and keep the tree secured in a sturdy tree stand.
- Place the tree away from traffic areas, doorways, heating vents, radiators, stoves, fireplaces and burning candles.
- Choose tinsel, artificial icicles and other trimmings made of plastic or non-lead-ed metals. Leaded materials are hazardous if ingested by children or pets.
- Avoid trimmings that are sharp and breakable or have small removable parts if small children are around



Toys and gifts:

- Select only toys suitable for the child's age group, and make sure to read and follow all instructions.
- Toys with small parts are

dangerous for children under three years of age. Keep them out of their reach.

- Make sure batteries in toys for young children are properly installed and not accessible to the child. A child should not take battery-operated toys to bed
- Dispose of packing materials (such as Styrofoam pellets and plastic bags) quickly. Children can choke on these items.
- Keep cosmetics (such as perfume, aftershave and nail polish remover), medications, and household cleaners out of children's reach and away from heat sources.
- If using cosmetics for the first time, place a small amount on the back of the hand for a couple of hours. Redness or swelling may indicate an allergy and the product should not be used.



Candles:

- Do not leave burning candles unattended and use sturdy candleholders that won't easily tip over.
- Keep burning candles out of the reach of children, and away from pets, trees, decorations and wrapping paper.
- Trimmings and candles that look or smell like food or candy should be kept away from children. These

products are attractive to children and may cause choking if they try to eat them.



Holiday Lights:

- Use only lights that are certified by a recognized organization (CSA, ULC or UL) to decorate your home.
- Use indoor lights for inside the home and outdoor lights for outside the home.
- Check all light bulbs before use. Replace broken or burnt out light bulbs with those recommended by the manufacturer.
- Check light strings and extension cords. Discard any that are frayed or have exposed wires, loose connections, or broken light sockets. Never run electrical cords through doorways or under carpets.
- Do not overload electrical outlets. Use more than one outlet if the wattage of your lights is more than the outlet can handle.
- Turn off all holiday lights before you go to bed or leave your home.

Have a safe and joyous time over the Holidays.