

January 28, 2019

TO: Retail Wholesale Local Union Presidents, Recording Secretaries, Unit Chairpersons

Making gains when confronted by change
Advancing Unifor's 'Program for Action' in Retail-Wholesale

UNIFOR RETAIL CONFERENCE
Friday, April 12 to Sunday, April 14, 2019

Greetings,

It has been four years since Unifor hosted its first national conference on the Retail and Wholesale industry. That conference solidified an ambitious and far-reaching sector development strategy for the union (referred to as our 'Program for Action'), a program that sought to ratchet up our wages and working conditions through collective bargaining and to better engage our members in important political activism. By many measures, this Program has been successful. Unifor not only secured groundbreaking contract provisions that improve the lives of RW workers, our union successfully campaigned for long-overdue improvements to minimum wages and other provincial labour standards. Over the past four years, and in many respects, Unifor achieved what many thought was previously unachievable.

However, alongside those successes came new challenges – challenges that require our union's urgent attention and action.

For starters, the Canadian retail, wholesale and warehousing industries are facing a major technological upheaval, as online shopping advances, consumer shopping habits change and as automated machinery becomes more widely adopted. These changes raise serious questions about the future of work in the RW industry, our bargaining demands and our ability to organize new members.

Alongside these impending technological transformations are changing political headwinds, across provinces. In some cases, political shifts have created new opportunities to improve the lives of low-wage, precarious workers (like in B.C.). While in other places, (like Ontario) these political changes threaten to take them away.

Making gains when confronted by change, Unifor’s second national RW conference, aims to delve into these (and other) issues affecting our workplaces. This conference is about learning, worker empowerment and developing new strategies to win decent work: building on our successful 2015 Program for Action.

This conference will invite union leaders and leading experts in the RW industry to engage directly with Unifor delegates and front-line activists from across Canada on these top-of-mind issues. The conference will include a mix of guest presentations, keynote speeches, facilitated workshops and informal discussions, providing delegates a range of opportunities to **learn about the issues, engage in dialogue and direct union strategy moving forward.**

The conference will be held at the Unifor Family Education Centre in Port Elgin, Ontario. The conference will begin on Friday, April 12 at 7:00 p.m. and will adjourn on Sunday, April 14 no later than 11:30 am. Please note that room registration and check-in will begin after 3:00 p.m. on Friday, with dinner being served at 5:30 p.m.

Reservations and Accommodations

Reservations/Accommodations at the Unifor Family Education Centre will only be made upon receipt of the attached Reservation Form (including registration fee, room and meals, paid in advance by cheque, Visa, MasterCard or American Express).

Deadline for registration for on-site accommodations is Friday, March 15. Please forward the Reservation Form to the Front Desk via email at confcentre@unifor.org or fax to 519-389-3222.

The registration fee for this conference is \$60.

Room and meal rates at the Unifor Family Education Centre **for the two night stay are:**

- Single Occupancy \$520.00
- Single Room with Spouse or Child (17+) \$620.00
- Double Occupancy (sharing with another delegate) \$370.00
- Children, age 12-16 \$ 50.00 per child
- Children, age 11 and under No Charge

All rates above include two nights’ accommodation and meals, starting with dinner on Friday, and ending with lunch on Sunday.

Note: If family member(s) are being paid for by the individual and not by the local, the local pays the “single occupancy” rate and the following rates apply (includes taxes) **for the two nights:**

- Spouse or child 17+ = \$113.00
- Child 12 to 16 years = \$ 56.50

Important: TWO cheques must be sent along with a copy of the Registration Form, Reservation Form and (only if necessary) the Meal Requirements form:

- One cheque for the conference registration fee (\$60 per delegate)
- A separate cheque for the total cost of room and meals for all delegates (as per above rates)

Both cheques are to be made payable to the **Unifor Family Education Centre** and mailed, along with a copy of the enclosed Registration Form, Reservation Form and (only if necessary) Meal Requirements Form, directly to: Unifor Family Education Centre, 115 Shipley Avenue, Port Elgin ON N0H 2C5. **Note: the Registration form should also be emailed to linda.mccrorie@unifor.org.**

Cancellations must be made in writing 24 hours prior to the conference. Failure to do so will result in billing for the first night's accommodation.

If you have any questions about accommodations, please call the Centre at 1-800-265-3735.

Travel from and to Toronto Pearson Airport

Grey Bruce Airbus arrangements can be made directly at 1-800-361-0393 or 1-519-389-4433 for delegates who need transportation from and to Pearson Airport.

On-Site Child Care Available

Free child care is available for children of eligible delegates **during conference hours only**. An eligible delegate is a single parent, a parent **not** accompanied by a spouse/companion, or where **both** parents are delegates. **Delegates requiring child care must pre-register by March 15**. Include the attached Child Care form with the Reservation form. Child care is for children up to and including age 12. If you have any questions about child care please call 1-519-389-3233.

If you have any questions about the conference, please contact Angelo DiCaro at 416-495-3754 or myself at 416-495-3755.

Registration deadline is March 15.

In solidarity,



Chris MacDonald
Assistant to the National President

CM:lmc/cope-343

cc: Front Office, National Representatives, NEB, Brian Johnson, FEC Front Desk, Laurie Wright

Att: Registration Form, Child care registration Form, Room Reservation Form, Meal Requirements Form