

New Union Communique

May 10, 2013

Progress Report on the CAW-CEP New Union Project

- **New Union constitutional highlights now out**
- **Regional tour makes its way across Canada**

Local union leaders and activists from the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union (CEP) have been gathering in regional meetings to hear details of the plan to create a new union at a founding convention in Toronto this Labour Day weekend.

The full schedule for the series of [14 regional forums is posted here](#). Each meeting begins with an overview of the overall project timeline, presented by Gaétan Ménard (Secretary-Treasurer of the CEP) and Peter Kennedy (Secretary-Treasurer of the CAW), including logistical details for the founding convention. Additional presentations to the regional meetings consider three aspects of the New Union project in further detail: the process for choosing a name and logo, features of the draft constitution, and the New Union's plan to offer membership to Canadians who work outside of certified or recognized bargaining units.

The meetings have been very well-attended, with plenty of time for questions and discussion with local union leaders in each region. "These forums are an opportunity for our local leadership to learn more about the proposed structure and operation of the new union, so they can attend the founding convention with full knowledge and enthusiasm," said Kennedy. He and Ménard co-chaired the 16-member Proposal Committee which issued a detailed report last year calling for the formation of the new union.

Delegates to each meeting have received a booklet describing the main features of the proposed constitution for the new union, including: membership conditions and dues; the structure of the New Union's Canadian, Quebec, regional, and industrial councils; procedures for election of officers and National Executive Board members; delegate entitlements to conventions and councils; and special bodies for skilled trades members, retirees, and equity groups. [This constitutional highlights brochure is also available on-line](#).

"Our new constitution is much more than a combination of the best features of the existing CEP and CAW constitutions," said Ménard. "It is an innovative and principled document which lays the foundation for a fighting union that can successfully confront the challenges ahead of us."

Detailed language in the full constitution is still being fine-tuned, including by considering input received from the regional meetings. The complete draft constitution will be posted on-line, and distributed to all locals of the two unions, by the end of June, allowing ample time for review and discussion before the founding convention.

Delegates to the regional meetings are also learning about the legal “path” by which the New Union will be formally created at the founding convention. That convention will feature multiple sessions of CAW and CEP delegates – meeting both separately and jointly. Each union will first approve the plan for forming the new union, which will then be formally established at an initial founding meeting (whose primary task will be to approve the new constitution). Then delegates from each of the CAW and the CEP will then vote to merge with the newly-established organization, which will subsequently reconvene to carry on its business (including election of officers and National Executive Board members).

Meanwhile, union staff and outside experts are engaged in a detailed process for choosing the new union’s name and logo. Focus-group testing in 8 cities, conducted with the assistance of external communications specialists, received detailed feedback (from both union members and non-members) regarding potential themes and values which could be incorporated into the New Union’s name. Designers are now developing a short-list of potential names and logos to be considered by leaders from both unions in coming weeks. Following meetings of the two unions’ National Executive Boards to approve the final name, it will be unveiled publicly for the first time on May 30.

The New Union’s founding convention will occur in Toronto, at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, from Friday August 30 through Sunday September 1. Members of the new union will then march under their new banners in Labour Day parades in numerous cities and regions across Canada on September 2.

Further information regarding the New Union Project is available at www.newunionproject.ca.