Unifor heads into 2016 with plans to build on the organizing successes of the past year, when more than 6,200 new members were welcomed into the union.

“We had an incredible year in 2015,” said Organizing Director John Aman. “Unifor has made organizing new members a priority since its founding, and that has been shown in our successes.”

Over the course of 2015, Unifor organized 6,287 workers at 54 workplaces across Canada, including hospitality and gaming, airlines, manufacturing, telecom and more across the Canadian economy.

Unifor’s Organizing department also held a successful All In organizing conference in 2015, attracting local activists from across Canada to get them more involved in
In Brief

Local Union Task Force survey

Unifor’s ambitious Local Union Task Force project to strengthen one of our most important structures, union locals, wants to hear from local leadership and members.

To do that, a questionnaire has been set up on Survey Monkey. Just go to Unifor.org/LUTF, and click on the survey link.

It takes about 15 minutes, and will help the task force further understand how members are involved in their local union, what kinds of services they receive, their views and opinions about local union work and more.

The task force was set up by Unifor National President Jerry Dias last year, and is holding town hall meetings across Canada.

See also story on Page 3.

Unifor launches sponsorship program with Lifeline Syria for refugees

Seventy-six Unifor activists met recently in Toronto for a day-long training with Lifeline Syria representatives to launch Unifor’s Syrian refugee sponsorship program. More such training is planned.

On the ground, Unifor members will assist by offering everything from an initial welcome at the airport, to orientation to life in Canada, to assistance with accessing health, to education and social services in the community.

“Unifor is backing with financial aid, but for the next 12 months, 76 members will open up their own homes, their hearts and their lives to offer guidance, social interaction and friendship,” said Mohamad Alsadi, Unifor’s Director of Human Rights and International Development.

“It is this kind of generosity from Unifor members that can make a significant difference to Syrian refugees.”

This first training was offered by Lifeline Syria representatives at the Local 112 office in Toronto. Training will continue this month on settlement planning.

Along with providing an overview of procedures and roles of sponsors, Lifeline Syria reps stressed the need for volunteers to provide emotional and moral support.

Financial sponsorship was made possible through Unifor’s Social Justice Fund. The union will continue to work with Locals across the country to raise further funds to assist more Syrian refugees.

If you’d like to help, contact Alsadi at mohamad.alsadi@unifor.org.

>> Continued from “CRTC risks TV jobs” on page 1

The Friends of Canadian Broadcasting study found that 6,830 jobs are at risk in the TV industry alone, with another 8,300 at risk due to the economic impact of the lost TV jobs, and a $400-million drop in spending on Canadian programming by 2020.

CRTC decisions have also been an issue at Hamilton TV station CHCH, where all staff was dismissed just before Christmas when the station declared bankruptcy. A new company with the same management immediately rehired about one-third of the staff.

Unifor National President Jerry Dias has said the station’s actions are an example of the failures of the CRTC under the previous Harper Government to address the funding needs of local broadcasters.

Unifor National President Jerry Dias met with CHCH staff, and promised the national union’s support.

Unifor’s Social Justice Fund. The union will continue to work with Locals across the country to raise further funds to assist more Syrian refugees.

If you’d like to help, contact Alsadi at mohamad.alsadi@unifor.org.
“Thousands joining Unifor” on page 1

Continued from

bringing new members into the union.

“Local involvement is key to organizing new members,” Aman said.

The largest bargaining unit organized in 2015 was Casino Rama near Orillia, Ontario, with 1,647 new members, who are currently negotiating their first contract.

Aman said the victory at Rama was part of a larger effort across the gaming industry to attract more members, with new bargaining units also organized at Ajax Downs, Georgia Downs and Grand Villa Casino.

“Hospitality and Gaming workers are seeing what joining Unifor can do for members and to step up their organizing efforts was handed out at the September conference, and is available online at unifor.org.

“I’d like to encourage all locals and Unifor activists to get involved with organizing,” Aman said.

“Helping workers join a union is the best thing you can do for them, and for our communities.”

Local 444 at the Windsor Chrysler, rose to National President of the CAW, and guided the union to a merger with CEP in 2013 to form Unifor before retiring.

He remains active, including as national task force advisor for English Canada for Unifor’s Local Union Task Force project to revitalize Locals.

Lewenza honoured by OFL, still active with LUTF

Retired CAW President Ken Lewenza has been inducted to the Ontario Federation of Labour’s Honour Roll for 2015 in recognition of his years of contributions to the province’s labour movement.

“I would like to thank and acknowledge the OFL and those responsible for the nomination and selection process of such a honour. There are a lot of more deserving union activist then I and I would have no problem taking a back seat to them,” Lewenza said.

Lewenza’s name will be added to a plaque for Honour Roll members, and two scholarships handed out in his name for 2016.

Lewenza, who began his union activism with Local 444 at the Windsor Chrysler, rose to National President of the CAW, and guided the union to a merger with CEP in 2013 to form Unifor before retiring.

He remains active, including as national task force advisor for English Canada for Unifor’s Local Union Task Force project to revitalize Locals.
Dear Unifor Brothers and Sisters;

It has been a huge privilege to serve as Economist for Unifor, and before that the CAW, for a total of 22 years. I can’t imagine a better place for a progressive researcher to build a career – and more importantly, contribute to our shared struggle for a better Canada.

Last month I finished my job with Unifor, and am now relocating to Australia with my family for a few years. (My partner has started an exciting position with the University of Sydney, and we’ve decided to undertake this “foreign posting” together with our two kids.)

As we prepare to depart, I’ve been reflecting on my rich experiences with the union, the many campaigns we fought, the victories we won, the solidarity we built.

The greatest highlight of all, however, was getting to participate in the founding of Unifor in 2013 – culminating an unprecedented and creative process, as we together imagined how to energize and strengthen our union and the whole labour movement.

Even from Australia I will serve in an advisory capacity to Unifor’s leadership team, including occasional visits back to Canada. I will keep tweeting regularly (@jimbostanford), teaching occasional economics courses, and providing commentary for newspapers, CBC’s “Bottom Line” panel, and websites. In short, while my current job with Unifor has ended, I will remain fully engaged in the battle of ideas over how to build an inclusive, fair, productive economy.

Thank you for the opportunity to serve this great union!

In solidarity, Jim Stanford