Navistar ruling expands pension rights

A ruling by the Ontario Financial Services Tribunal on a long-standing pension dispute at Navistar not only upholds a previous decision on the workers’ pension rights, but expands them.

“This decision shows that companies cannot just arbitrarily take away people’s hard-earned pensions,” Unifor National President Jerry Dias said.

“We not only won the appeal, but expanded the original superintendent of pension’s ruling. This is a solid victory for the workers at Navistar, who have been through a long and hard fight to defend their rights.”

In a ruling released late last week, the Ontario Financial Services Tribunal upheld an earlier decision.

Unifor files for review of pipeline

Arguing that the National Energy Board presented a deeply flawed report to federal cabinet, Unifor will join multiple First Nations and environmental organizations using legal grounds to stop the Northern Gateway pipeline from being built.

“The Northern Gateway pipeline brings sky-high risk to the environment and First Nations communities,” said Dias.

Bomardier strike underway

Workers at the Bombardier plant in Thunder Bay began strike action July 14 to stand up for good-paying jobs in Ontario.

“We all need to work together to ensure that good jobs survive in this province,” said Unifor National President Jerry Dias.

The 900 members of Unifor Local 1075 at Bombardier in Thunder Bay began strike action July 14 to defend pensions and benefits.

#unifor

Here’s a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion

@joewarnock · Why are >400 skilled technicians on strike at Cascade Aerospace? The answer might surprise you. #bcpoli #bcunion

@GoodJobsEmplois The minimum wage has been the same in real dollars for nearly 40 years! http://www.thestar.com/business/2014/07/16/minimum_wage_in_2013 ... #goodjobs
In brief

Local 87-M, Globe and Mail

Unionized employees at the Globe and Mail voted 84 per cent in favour of a new collective agreement after narrowly avoiding a strike.

The deal included annual wage increases of 1, 2 and 2 per cent over a three-year deal. The bargaining team also fended off a company proposal that reporters write advertorial copy.

Some 374 Globe journalists, sales reps and administrative staff are represented by Unifor.

Local 4511, car dealers

Local 4511 members working in car dealerships in the Montreal area voted 97 per cent to ratify a new contract that includes a pay increase of 7.5 per cent over three years.

The employer’s contribution to group insurance plans increased by 10% and a slight increase has also been made to the pension fund.

There are improved vacations and a framework for more flexible hours for the 700 members.

Photo spotlight

$30,000 raised at Retired National CAW President Ken Lewenza’s roast went to Windsor groups helping those in need.

Unifor members join Toyota employees to march in the Cambridge Canada day parade.

Unifor at Mississippi freedom conference

Unifor sent nine delegates to the Mississippi Freedom Summer 50th Anniversary conference, the only Canadians at the event marking 50 years since three civil rights workers were killed by the Ku Klux Klan in that state.

“A repeated message heard at the conference was that workers’ rights are at the heart of the civil rights movement today,” said Vinay Sharma, Unifor’s Director of Human Rights.

Andrew Goodman, James Chaney and Michael Schwerner were killed June 21, 1964 while registering black voters, marking a turning point in the civil rights movement.

The conference took place June 25-29 at Tougaloo College in Jackson, Miss. Tougaloo, set up to educate former slaves, was a safe haven for 1960s civil rights activists.

Speakers included Hollis Watson, Danny Glover, Harry Belafonte, Dick Gregory and Ayana Gregory. Unifor delegates included Sharma, National President Jerry Dias, Assistant to the President Deb Tveit and activists from across Canada.

Along with multiple panels and discussions on workers’ rights, conference participants took part in a rally organized by student activists from around the U.S. at Nissan’s giant plant in nearby Canton, in support of their right to organize with the UAW and demanding fair treatment of workers and a fair union representation vote.

Delegates to the Mississippi Freedom conference attended a rally at a nearby Nissan plant to support their right to join the UAW.

UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS – KATIE ARNUP, SARAH BLACKSTOCK, IAN BOYKO, SHELLEY BURGOYNE, SHANNON DEVINE, MARIE-ANDRÉE L’HEUREUX, STUART LAIDLAW, AND ANNE MARIE VINCENT
and went further by expanding the number of workers eligible for an unreduced early retirement, and those eligible for a supplementary 0.9 of a year’s service to count toward their pensions.

Dias complimented the hard work of the bargaining committee and Unifor staff in making this victory possible.

The decision means an estimated $28 million for retirees from the plant, which once employed about 1,000 workers and office staff in Unifor Locals 127 and 35.

To see the complete ruling, go to: [http://www.unifor.org/Navistar](http://www.unifor.org/Navistar)
Pipeline exporting crude isn’t good for Canada, job creation

Russ Day, Unifor Local 601 unit chair at the Chevron Burnaby Refinery, recently had the Letter of the Day in the Vancouver Province newspaper. The following letter appeared June 29:

A recent editorial from a handful of construction unions (“Northern Gateway pipeline needed to enrich us all”) was long on rhetoric about the Northern Gateway pipeline and short on facts.

According to the Alberta Federation of Labour, only 228 permanent jobs will be created from a pipeline opposed by 130 First Nations, most BC municipalities, and half of British Columbians.

Beyond a paltry 36 months of short-term pipeline construction jobs, the Northern Gateway pipeline (and pending Kinder Morgan and Keystone XL projects) will ship unrefined bitumen to foreign markets, robbing Canadians of thousands of stable, long-term upgrading, refining and petro-chemical jobs.

An Exxon Valdez-type tanker spill would cost the fishing and tourism industry on the North Coast billions, wiping out the already meager benefit to the province of British Columbia.

The Enbridge project, or any project that poses so much risk to the coast, that is opposed overwhelmingly by First Nations, that fails to create a meaningful number of long-term jobs for Canadians is not just divisive—it is foolish.

Instead of enriching foreign oil barons, the federal government should view our natural resources as a way to maximize benefit to Canadians over the long term. That means addressing First Nations’ concerns, taking the time to get our greenhouse gas emissions under control, and creating stable, good-paying jobs for Canadians.

A responsibly managed value-added Canadian oil industry would not only mean additional revenue for social programs and infrastructure, but would also provide Canada with the opportunity to provide incentives to develop a lasting green energy industry for future generations of Canadians.

Standing up for pensions and benefits

Unifor Local 252 is defending the benefits, pension and wages of its 38 members working at Emerald Energy from Waste in Brampton, Ont. and began strike action earlier this month against the company.

At issue is a company demand that members co-pay 20 per cent on all benefits, including dental. Currently, the company pays 100 per cent. The company also wants a cap on its contributions to the pension plan.

On wages, the company wants to remove double time from the overtime language and to limit wage increases 0.75 per cent each year.

The strike began July 3, almost a week after the strike/lock out deadline of June 27.

Members and supporters rallied outside the head offices of parent company U-Pak on July 14.

Bargaining begins for Northern Ontario hospitals

Unifor National President Jerry Dias was in Thunder Bay on July 14 to launch bargaining for a new collective agreement covering 2,500 workers at hospitals across Northern Ontario.

“These are the men and women we turn to when we are most in need of care, and it’s time they had a collective agreement that treats them with the respect they deserve and recognizes the vital role they play,” Dias said.

The numerous classifications including registered practical nurses, personal support workers, social workers, kitchen and administrative staff are members of Unifor Locals 229 and 1359, and work at nine hospitals across Northern Ontario, stretching from Atikokan to Sault Ste. Marie.

They have not had a pay increase in more than two years, under a collective agreement reached through arbitration in the last round of contract talks.


“After a two-year wage freeze, part of the arbitrated settlement in the last talks, these workers need enhancements to their compensation to stay in line with their peers,” Dias said.