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Delegates to Unifor's recent "We Will Vote" conference for young workers took time to canvas for NDP candidate Linda McQuaig.

Unifor launches federal election campaign

Unifor's federal election campaign is well underway right across the country. Regional campaign coordinators have been contacting local unions,

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Canadian Council soon

Unifor's second Canadian Council takes place later this month in Montreal, a chance to take stock of where the union has been the last year, and where it is going in 2016.

"In Unifor's first two years, we have established ourselves as a strong and progressive voice for workers," said Unifor National President Jerry

Dias. "Working people will need that voice in the coming year, with the federal election, anti-labour laws across Canada, pension issues and so much more."

Dias will give the Council's opening address. Quebec Director Renaud Gagné will also make an address. Secretary-Treasurer Peter Kennedy will give a financial update, and regional directors will present their reports.

Keynote speakers include retired general Romeo

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Young workers conference held

Approximately 70 young Unifor members from across Canada attended a 'We Will Vote' conference in Toronto to discuss election organizing strategies, youth mobilization in the upcoming federal election, and issues such as good jobs, affordable

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#unifor

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion

@GabRossM

Such great energy in a room after a long day of getting ready for #elxn42! Thanks @UniforTheUnion, it was a blast. #IWillVote2015

@RPulvermacher

We need a government that works for us uniforvotes.ca

Unifor and Domtar boost trades training

Unifor, industry, and the university in Kamloops have partnered to better prepare students for job opportunities in the skilled trades.

A memorandum of understanding was signed July 28 between Unifor 10-B, Domtar, and Thompson Rivers University to enhance the quality of trades training in the region.

“Unifor is committed to collaborating with communities for access to good jobs,” said Scott Doherty, Executive Assistant to Unifor’s National President.

The goals of the agreement are to support TRU trades training programs, “Foundation Programs”, and to train and, where possible, hire students from TRU into Domtar’s Kamloops mill where they can begin a career in trades as Unifor 10-B members.

“We’re very excited to be a part of this process,” said Unifor 10-B President Charlie Fraser.

Details of the agreement include mill access for students and instructors, job shadowing and work experience and other unique learning opportunities allowing students to acquire hours toward a trade.


Domtar and Unifor 10-B will provide bursaries/scholarships. Domtar will provide in-kind surplus equipment donations. 

Photo spotlight

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Unifor members, including bus drivers, were out in full force for the recent Vancouver Pride Parade.



Vancouver Pride was a family affair.

Unifor saves jobs at Winnipeg Parmalat

When a complicated land deal between the City of Winnipeg and developers was in jeopardy, Unifor Local 755 sprung into action to help save local jobs.

Parmalat Foods, which employs 50 area workers, and other firms were working on a development contract with the city toward a \$50-million investment from Parmalat.

But when some contractors reneged, the deal — and jobs of Unifor members — risked falling through.

Local 755 President Gerry Lepage began a campaign that led to a city council meeting in July, where the land transfer was approved.

“We knew we had to act fast. Good jobs are vital to this community,” said Lepage, aided by Winnipeg

Labour Council President Dave Sauer.

Lepage and other Unifor activists convinced all but one councilor to vote for the land transfer.

“Our members mobilized and demonstrated that Unifor is invested in good jobs staying in Winnipeg,” said National Representative Frank Wright. 

ORPP needs to mirror CPP

While it is a positive step that the Ontario government is moving ahead with pensions for the two-thirds of Ontarians with no workplace pension, it is disappointing that there will be so many exemptions to the new provincial plan, Unifor says.


“A universal and mandatory plan is the best solution for all working people in this province, and Unifor will continue to push for that,” said Unifor Ontario Regional Director Katha Fortier.

“This new Ontario pension should model the successful Canada Pension Plan.”

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne recently announced that the Ontario Registered Pension Plan, promised in last year’s provincial election, will be phased in over several years, and will exclude employers with minimal pension plans.

“For those with no workplace pension at all, this is a positive step, but it could be so much more,” Fortier said.

The threshold for the minimum income for the plan to kick in has not been set. Fortier said the plan needs to include low-income workers, who face the most difficult time in retirement.

Fortier said that with a federal election in two months, there was no need to rush on plans for the ORPP. Both the NDP and the Liberals support and enhanced CPP, which would eliminate the need for an Ontario plan. 


UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS: KATIE ARNUP, SARAH BLACKSTOCK, IAN BOYKO, SHELLEY BURGoyNE, SHANNON DEVINE, STUART LAIDLAW, SARAH LESNIEWSKI, MARIE-ANDRÉE L’HEUREUX, AND ANNE MARIE VINCENT

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soon" on page 1

Dallaire, Dennis Williams of the UAW, and youth activist Brigitte DePape, who came to prominence when she held up a Stop Harper sign as a Senate page.

There will also be discussions about women and elections, and bargaining and political action for workers in precarious and low-paying jobs.

The fall federal election will also be a topic of discussion, including a presentation from Unifor Economist Jim Stanford on the Harper government's economic track record, and resolutions.

There will be resolutions on missing and murdered Aboriginal women, climate change and the Local Union Task Force. 

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education, child care, and retirement security.

Amy Huziak from the Canadian Labour Congress gave a presentation on retirement security, and Lyndsay Macdonald, from the Child Care Advocacy Association spoke about the 'Vote Child Care 2015' campaign and the need for affordable child care for working parents and carers.

"We currently don't have any sustained earmarked federal funding for child care," said Macdonald. "We're tracking what the parties are offering."


Other speakers included Unifor Economist Jim Stanford, who gave a presentation on Prime Minister Stephen Harper's failed economic record, and Unifor President Jerry Dias



About 70 young people attended Unifor's "We Will Vote" conference for young workers.

spoke about the need for young workers to become active in politics. "It's young people that are bearing the brunt of the Conservatives' policy failures," said Dias.

The conference, which

was held from August 7th to 9th, concluded with a training session and neighbourhood canvass, alongside Toronto Centre NDP candidate Linda McQuaig. 

Did you know?

Polls have shown that most 18- to 35-year-olds vote for a party other than the Conservatives. But in the last federal election, nearly two out of every three youth did not vote.

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encouraging them to have their members sign the 'I Will Vote' pledge card.

Members can also sign the 'I Will Vote' pledge card online and can get connected to events going on in their area.

As part of the campaign, Unifor has also launched a great new election website, with membership videos, shareable content, sector information and other material.

The site will be updated with new content each week, including the upcoming candidate question cards, unveiled on August 24.

With the writ drop on August 2, the election



campaign period will be one of the longest in Canadian history. Unifor is using this time to reach out to members in every local union.

Tens of thousands of pledge cards have already been sent out. If you haven't signed a pledge card at work yet, ask your workplace representative.

Every vote will count in this important election. Commit to voting and get involved.

To sign the 'I Will Vote' pledge, visit: uniforvotes.ca/pledge_your_vote


To find out how to contact the regional campaign co-ordinator in your area, visit:

uniforvotes.ca/contact 

Truckers go to court

Unifor is asking a provincial judge to direct the Container Trucking Commissioner to enforce the wages owed to BC container truck drivers as part of the March 2014 Joint Action Plan.

The plan was signed by BC Premier Christy Clark, representatives for federal Minister of Transportation Lisa Raitt, and Unifor.

"We have a deal signed by the Premier, that should be worth something," said Unifor BC Director Gavin McGarrigle. "Trucking companies are breaking the rules, and the Commissioner is letting them." 

Harper government has no mandate for TPP talks

Canadian trade negotiators have no mandate to accept terms in Trans Pacific Partnership negotiations that would damage vital Canadian industries, says Jerry Dias, National President of Unifor.

"These talks have occurred completely in secret. Business leaders may know what's on the table, but Canadians don't. And now a federal election has been called, Canadian

officials have absolutely no mandate to negotiate away our industries and jobs," said Dias.


Dias called on Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade, and Development officials to release details of concessions they have made in the negotiations, so that Canadians can have full understanding of what is at stake going into the upcoming election.

Most discussion of the TPP in Canada to date has revolved around the fate of agricultural marketing programs in the dairy and poultry industries (which would suffer dramatic damage if demands to abolish Canada's marketing rules were accepted).

But there are many other industries which would also experience major dislocation under a deal - including the auto

sector, machinery, and other manufacturing.

Unifor represents about 40,000 members working in the auto assembly and auto parts industries.

Because the TPP would grant tariff-free access to the North American market to vehicles from Japan, it would hurt sales for Canadian-made vehicles and parts. Canada already has a \$5 billion auto trade deficit with Japan. 

Unifor report lists Harper's economic failures

A new report written by Unifor economists Jim Stanford and Jordan Brennan concludes that Prime Minister Stephen Harper's economic record has been the worst of any Canadian leader since WWII.

The report, which compared Harper's economic record using 16 indicators, found that Harper performed the worst on seven of them, and on

five more is second-last.

"This poor economic record cannot be blamed on the 2008-2009 recession, as Canada's economy has ranked well within the lower half of all OECD countries," Stanford said.

"This report destroys the myth that the Conservatives are 'good economic managers' - they are in fact very poor ones," Stanford said.


Stanford and Brennan compare annual data from Statistics Canada and other publicly available sources regarding 16 key conventionally used indicators of economic progress and well-being, including work, production and incomes distribution and debt.

On August 5, Stanford participated in a Twitter Q&A and answered



Jim Stanford

questions on the report using the hashtag #HarperEconomy.

The complete economic report is available at unifor.org. 

Picking up after the devastating earthquake in Nepal

The Unifor Social Justice Fund provides support on the ground to agencies in cases of sudden disasters.

On April 25, 2015, a 7.9 magnitude earthquake shook the bustling capital of Kathmandu, Nepal.

The powerful earthquake killed thousands with tens of thousands more badly injured.

On May 12, a second earthquake - this time a 7.3

magnitude - shook Nepal, in the Himalayan foothills between Kathmandu and Mount Everest. More than 8,500 people died, another 22,000 people were injured and 2.8 million people were left homeless.

The SJF, along with thousands of additional monies from Unifor locals and individual members, contributed \$60,000 to Oxfam Canada, which had

an emergency team on the ground shortly after the first earthquake.

Relief efforts kicked into action, mitigating further tragedy and helping survivors rebuild their lives.

Oxfam's emergency team in Nepal reached more than 367,000 women, men and children in seven of the worst hit districts.

Aided by the contributions of the SJF,

Unifor locals and members, Oxfam Canada was able to provide a total of 45,300 emergency hygiene kits with items such as blankets, soap, underwear and toiletries, clean water for 30,000 people, 4,470 latrines plus handwashing sites, 32,800 shelter kits and food baskets to 27,000 households.

For more information, visit: unifor.org/sjf 