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Gabrielle Scrimshaw inspired delegates to the recent Prairie Regional Council meeting with a talk about her journey overcoming difficult odds coming from a reserve in Northern Saskatchewan. Aboriginal issues were a large topic of discussion at the meeting.

Unifor launches TPP campaign

Unifor launched one of its largest national campaigns at the recent Prairie Council, with a simple message to the federal government: Trade the TPP.

"The Trans-Pacific Partnership isn't really even a trade deal. It's a corporate rights deal," Unifor National President Jerry Dias said.

Dias pointed to the TPP's Investor-State Dispute Settlement system, which would give companies the right to sue the government if it passes laws that hurt their profits - even if those laws are in the public interest.

"Unifor believes in trade that improves the lives of working Canadians, protects public services and enhances each country's ability to promote its culture and pass laws in the interests of its own citizens," Dias said. "The

Unifor active in Prairies

Unifor needs to support and encourage the emerging generation of Aboriginal activists, including several who were elected recently to the Manitoba legislature, Western Director Joie Warnock told Unifor's Prairie Council meeting.

"Now is the time for Canadians to act to end the inequality. To rise up as a society and demand an end

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Federal government review of Broadcast Act welcome

A planned review of the Broadcast Act be the federal government is welcomed, if it is done right, Unifor National President Jerry Dias says.

"The goal of this evaluation must be to encourage the development of home-grown content that not only tells Canadian stories to capture the Canadian audience, but

also intrigues the rest of the world to get to know us," Dias said in his regular column in the Huffington Post recently.

"It is no easy task, but surely it can be done." Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly has said that "everything is on the table" in this review, which starts with an online questionnaire at canada.pch.gc.ca, and

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Convention 2016, Updates

Unifor holds its second Convention from August 22 to 26 at the Shaw Centre in Ottawa.

Until then, watch this space in your national newsletter for updates on what is planned, and for pending deadlines.

- Registration deadline is July 22.

- Resolutions and Constitutional amendments must be approved by your local union and submitted to the National Secretary-Treasurer by May 22.

- The Convention convenes August 22 and is expected to conclude by noon August 26.

- Industry Councils will be held August 21.

- A new delegates orientation will be held the evening of August 21.

See also unifor.org/events.



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Unifor discusses cap-and-trade with Ontario environment minister

Unifor joined other members of the Clean Economy Alliance, a multi-sector coalition of 90 organizations united to support Ontario's climate change efforts, as they met with Environment and Climate Change Minister Glen Murray and other MPPs at Queen's Park recently.

"We've appreciated that our partner ENGOs and environmentally conscious business sectors have understood and supported the importance of jobs and worker rights in the cap-and-trade system and the larger action plan," Unifor Ontario Regional Director Katha Fortier told the Alliance.

Fortier was joined by Jordan

Brennan, Unifor economist and Dave Moffat, Assistant to the President.

"Unifor members work at about 35 of the 150 large emitters listed on Ontario's database," said Moffat. "We need to be part of the discussion on the province's climate action plan."

Fortier told the MPPs and Alliance members that Unifor supports the goals of Ontario's climate change program but the union is calling for constructive changes to Bill 172, the Climate Change Mitigation and Low-carbon Economy Act.

"We want cap and trade to work," said Fortier. "However we believe that its success



Ontario Environment Minister Glen Murray, Ontario Regional Director Katha Fortier and David Moffat, Assistant to the President.

depends on our ability to demonstrate to Ontario workers that they will not be left behind as economic and environmental change transforms our province."

Fortier and Fred Wilson, Unifor Director of Strategic Planning, earlier delivered that message to the committee looking into the bill.

"We're asking MPPs to think about these workers" said Wilson.

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to the racial discrimination that undermines the hopes and dreams of First Nations children," she said.

Keynote speaker Gabrielle Scrimshaw continued on this theme with a thoughtful talk about her journey overcoming the odds coming from a reserve in Northern Saskatchewan.

Economist David Thompson outlined concrete examples of ways to transition workers from one industry into another.

National President Jerry Dias motivated delegates by outlining how organized labour is changing the national conversation about everything from sustainable development to trade to good jobs.

"Unifor is making sure



Delegates to Prairie Council marched to Regina's Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada office to show support for protesters demanding that the federal government address the poverty, overcrowded housing, health needs, the suicide crisis and other issues in Aboriginal communities.

that workers part of the dialogue," said Dias.

"We are changing politics in this country."

Delegates resolved to take action to ban asbestos, fight the Trans Pacific Partnership, and strengthen

the Canada Pension Plan.

Warnock said western activists helped defeat the Harper Government, and warned of fresh challenges from new governments in Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

>> Continued from "Unifor launches TPP campaign" on page 1

TPP, unfortunately, is not that kind of trade deal."

Unifor's TPP campaign was launched at Prairie Council on April 30, and will ramp up over the coming months as the federal government holds public consultations across the country on the deal.

"The federal Liberal Government has said it wants to hear from Canadians about the TPP - and Unifor will be there to tell them the deal just isn't good enough," said Roland Kiehne, Unifor's Director of Member Mobilization and Political Action.

The TPP is a proposed new "free trade" between 12 Pacific rim nations: Australia, Brunei, Canada,

Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States of America and Vietnam.

Negotiations were completed in October 2015, during the last federal election. Kiehne said that Canada was late to join the negotiations in 2012, after 15 rounds of talks had already taken place.

"That put us in a position of weakness at the negotiations, and the results of that weakness can be seen in the threat the TPP poses to many sectors of our economy," Kiehne said.

Unifor activists across Canada will be mobilized to make sure politicians at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels know the threats posed by the TPP, Kiehne said.

A dedicated web page



Roland Kiehne, Unifor's Director of Member Mobilization and Political Action, launched the Trade the TPP campaign at the Prairie Council meeting.

was set up at unifor.org/tpp as part of the campaign. There are already several documents on the site, with many more coming - along with sector-by-sector analyses of the TPP's impact on Canada's major

industries, including dairy, auto, health care, the media and more.

Unifor's trade policy paper, *Imagining a Fair Trade Future*, outlines 12 essential elements of a fair trade deal.

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will continue with public discussions next fall.

This is the first such review of the industry since the Mulroney government overhauled the Broadcast Act 25 years ago - long before anyone had heard of digital streaming or online services such as Netflix.

Dias said Joly ought to be commended for tackling the laws around Canadian broadcasting, which originated in a simpler era before the digital age, Dias went on to warn that just as no one could have imagined Netflix or YouTube 25 years ago, no one today can imagine what advancements might come next - or how to write laws that might remain relevant.

"Finding ways to

balance the digital era with supporting local programming is key if Canada is going to continue to foster local democracy in communities," Dias said.

"Fixing this balance must become an urgent priority for the CRTC and any revisions to the Broadcasting Act."

Dias said any attempt to use the review to shed Canadian content rules or restrictions on foreign ownership are wrong-headed and dangerous.

"The digital explosion has not diminished the overwhelming influence of American culture in Canada, or the importance of Canadian artists being able to tell Canadian stories. If anything, it has made the need more urgent - even as the solutions are less obvious," he said.

Show your pride and speak out

May 17 marks the International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia. Activities and local events will mark the date worldwide, and in your workplace every local can send a message about building a harassment-free workplace.

All locals are asked to put up a copy of the poster included in this issue of Uniforum. There is one in French, and one in English.

Unifor's work to defend and advocate for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people and their rights is a demonstration of how unions can be a positive force for change in society.



Our efforts to build inclusive, safe and healthy workplaces for all must be increased. Ending harassment and hate is our collective problem. No matter how hard it is, every worker must speak out to stop hate - it is the right thing to do.

This summer, members can also show their union pride and solidarity with LGBT workers by joining the Unifor PRIDE contingent. Check out the list of regional events at unifor.org/lgbt



Vancouver transit workers deliver strike mandate

More than 4,700 transit operators, skilled trades, SeaBus and support workers in Vancouver have voted 98 per cent in favour of a strike mandate in response to Coast Mountain Bus Company's contract concession demands.

Unifor Locals 111 and 2200 took the action to protest the company's refusal to table a fair wage offer and remove concessions. Talks started February 17 and broke off April 6.

"Our drivers work hard and the 98 per cent vote to strike if absolutely necessary is a demand for a reasonable wage offer and decent working conditions,"

said Unifor Local 111 president Nathan Woods.

"With this strong support we expect the employer to come back to the table with a fair contract offer and drop concessions for our transit operators."

Woods said an agreement can be achieved while avoiding service disruptions, if CMBC responds appropriately to the members' clear message.

Joe Elworthy, president of Unifor Local 2200 representing mechanics, Seabus, maintenance and other workers, said the vote indicates members "won't accept cutbacks to an already strained system."

"Transit in the Lower

IN THIS ISSUE Unifor launches a major national campaign to Trade the TPP. Prairie Council delegates prepare to be even more active in the coming year. Reviewing the Broadcast Act is a good idea, if done right. Discussing cap-and-trade. May 17 is International Day against Homophobia and Transphobia - free posters in French and English inside.



Unifor Local 111 President Nathan Wood addressed a rally in Ottawa recently on taxi and transportation issues.

Mainland needs a funding boost, not a cut, in order to improve service to hundreds of thousands of daily riders. Concessions by workers will only make things worse," Elworthy said.

Unifor BC Director Gavin

McGarrigle said Coast Mountain is out of step with jurisdictions around the world using transit improvements to stimulate local economies, lower air pollution and clear congested roads.