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uniFORUM



Leaders and activists from Unifor local 707a in Fort McMurray gathered recently to discuss Unifor's planned Rights at Work campaign for the spring.

Hudak makes a retreat

The surprise announcement from Tim Hudak that his Ontario Progressive Conservative party is dropping its plan to kill the Rand formula in the province is welcome, but his many other threats to working people continue

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Budget misses the mark

"As every Canadian knows, budgets are about choices," Unifor National President Jerry Dias said as the Harper government handed down its budget February 11. "Today the federal government made some good choices, but far too many bad ones." "The best way to address pocketbook issues is through quality employment - and our

government has once again missed the opportunity. With more than 390,000 unemployed youth, a small loan fund and a handful of apprenticeships are not going to do the job," said Dias. "Unifor is concerned that the budget fails to address the thing that's concerning Canadians most - a sluggish economy and dim job prospects," Dias stressed. Dias also raised concerns about the Canada Jobs Grant diverting funds from the Labour Market

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Quebec Council meets

More than 300 delegates gathered to establish the Unifor Quebec Council on February 11 and 12 in Quebec City. Among those making speeches were Michel Ouimet, Quebec Director, and Jerry Dias, Unifor's National President.

Ouimet got the ball rolling by mentioning the >> Continued on page 3

#unifor

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion

@jen_britton Dias: we cant be successful in isolation, we have to do this together #Unifor #RightsAtWork


#Unifor Rights at Work Leadership Tour comes to #Moncton #Halifax + #StJohns cnw.ca/zohV3 via @UniforTheUnion @JerryPDias #CanLab

In brief

Deal at Diageo

Workers at Amherstburg's Diageo plant have voted 84 per cent in favour of a new three-year deal that includes a one-dollar raise and a \$1,000 efficiency bonus for signing the contract, to be paid in November.

Unifor Local 2098 president D.J. Lacey said health benefits and a cost of living allowance will be maintained under the deal, which includes buyouts

There are currently 92 workers in the plant and 169 workers laid off. London, England, based Diageo bottles Crown Royal in Amherstburg. 

Windsor Salt investment

Unifor members at Windsor Salt have ratified a new contract, securing a commitment from the company to invest \$300 million to extend the life of the mine.


The agreement also includes improvements to language, vision care, life insurance, dental, shift premiums, long-term disability and boot allowance, plus wage gains of 30-45 cents an hour each year, plus increases in selected jobs. The company pension will switch from a defined benefit plan to defined contributing as of Dec. 31, 2015. 

Photo spotlight

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Unifor Quebec Director Michel Ouimet addresses the union's first Quebec Council.

PHOTO BY MARIE-ANDRÉE L'HEUREUX



Unifor members in Vancouver learn about Rights at Work.

PHOTO BY IAN BOYKO

Unifor scholarships – apply now!

Unifor is committed to building the strongest and most effective union and to improve the lives of working people. As a social union, we are concerned with the political actions that impact the lives of workers. Post-secondary education is out of reach for many working-class children due to skyrocketing tuition fees.


Unifor is part of a larger movement including students, faith groups and

ordinary citizens who are calling for action by the government to make post-secondary education accessible.

We have also established several scholarships worth \$2,000 each for the children of Unifor members in good standing or Unifor members who have passed away while in good standing. These scholarships support the first-year attendance at a

public Canadian institution (university, community college, technological institute).

The deadline for application is April 30, 2014.

Scholarship information and applications have been sent out to local unions and can be found here: <http://www.unifor.org/en/whats-new/event/unifor-bursary-information> 

United layoffs unacceptable

The layoffs and contracting out announced by United Airlines at airports across Canada recently are unacceptable and need to be reversed, Unifor National President Jerry Dias says.

"This is a devastating blow to an experienced workforce that has a proven record of performing their duties to the highest standards," Dias said.

Unifor represents 94 customer service


representatives at Toronto's Pearson International Airport.

They, along with 85 employees at Vancouver International Airport and 58 at the Calgary International Airport (members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers), are to be laid off in the coming months as the US airline contracts out the work.

Under the company

plan, the Unifor members in Toronto are to be off the job by June 1.

Dias blamed inadequate laws protecting the rights of workers in federally regulated sectors for the damage being done to more than 200 families across the country by this decision.

"There are little or no statutory protections when it comes to successor rights." 

UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS

SARAH BLACKSTOCK, SHANNON DEVINE, KATIE ARNUP, STUART LAIDLAW, IAN BOYKO AND SHELLEY BURGOYNE

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Agreements, which pay for crucial programs like retraining and literacy. Dias welcomed the additional monies for the Automotive Innovation Fund by the federal government, over the next two years. "Around the world, governments are working with industry and labour to support important economic sectors like auto," said Dias. "In order to compete in a global market, it's crucial that our government also plays a role."

Dias also said sector-based industrial strategies are needed to create jobs. "We've seen the low growth that comes from a directionless economy. Staying the course isn't useful when there seems to be no plan as to where we're going." 

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and will not be tolerated, Unifor National President Jerry Dias says.

"Tim Hudak has removed the centre piece of his backward policies, but he still intends to turn the clock back on labour legislation in this province," said Dias.

"He is clearly panicking after finding no support for his policies and a big loss in the Niagara by-election where his plan to kill the Rand formula was an issue with voters," Dias said.

The Rand formula sets out that while workers can choose whether to join a union, they must pay dues to the union they are covered by under the collective agreement it negotiates with the employer.

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important victory by members of Local 184 at Quebec Silicium, who, after an eight-month lockout, were able to return to work with their heads held high.

He reminded delegates of how the solidarity between Unifor local unions and the labour movement at large made all the difference in this victory.

Dias made an impassioned plea for the mobilization not only of our officers, but of all our members. "We are under attack! We are being targeted by several of this country's governments and employers. That's why we have to fight back. And to do that, we need to mobilize our members."

Another memorable moment came when, at the request of Marcel Trudel

Hudak backed off his controversial policy, which many in his own party did not support, during a breakfast address to the Toronto Board of Trade on February 21.

"The Rand formula helps ensure labour peace in this province, and the companies understand that - which is why they did not support Hudak's plan," Dias said.

"I think it's significant that the only time his address was interrupted by applause was when he announced that his party would not pursue killing the Rand Formula. This was a business crowd, and that's what they came to hear," Dias said.

Roland Kiehne, chair of the union's manufacturing sector, said Unifor will remain vigilant. 



Quebec Council elected its first executive. See the complete list of names on Page 4.

(Local 1210), the rainbow-coloured flag was raised on the podium. "We want to send a strong and clear message that our union is

firmly opposed to homophobic measures that oppress LGBT people in Russia and elsewhere in the world." 

Did you know?

There are more than 52,000 Unifor members in Quebec, and more than 249 locals. Almost half are in the Greater Montreal Region. Almost 8,000 of Quebec's Unifor members are part of federally regulated locals.

International RSI day

The final day of February is marked as International Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Awareness Day.

Catherine Fenech of Toronto, an injured worker, launched the annual observance in 2000. The idea was to use the day to increase public attention and corporate and government action on a class of injuries that statistics showed had been on the rise throughout the 1990s and today show no sign of declining.

The consequences of RSIs are far reaching and can affect every aspect of our lives- which is why we need regulations, not voluntary programs and enforcement.

Repetitive strain injury

(RSI), also known as work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSDs), is an umbrella term for a number of overuse injuries affecting the soft tissues (muscles, tendons, and nerves) of the neck, upper and lower back, chest, shoulders, arms and hands.

These disorders can be caused by work activities that are frequent and repetitive, or activities with awkward postures. They are a serious occupational health concern across the world and are recognized as leading causes of significant human suffering.

For RSI fact sheets go to: <http://www.unifor.org/en/whats-new/news/international-repetitive-strain-injury-rsi-day> 

Quebec executive elected

Unifor Quebec Council February 11-12 elected its first executive and committees of the Council.

Executive Board

Chair: Marcel Rondeau, Local 2002 – Transport Sector, Montreal.

Vice-Chair: Sophie Albert, Local 522 – Aerospace Sector, Montreal

Secretary -Treasurer: Daniel St-Pierre, Local 648 – Forest Sector, Montreal

Recording Secretary: Cathy St-Amand, Local 1044 – Manufacturing

Sector, Quebec City.

Members at Large: Richard L’Heureux, Local 8284 – Communications Sector, Montreal; Jean Simoneau, Local 184 – Smelter and Mines Sector, Trois-Rivières; François Arseneault, Local 698 – Automobile and Parts Sector, Montreal and Region.

Political Action Committee

Jacques Ouimet, Local 100; Véronique Figliuzzi, Local 6000; Philippe Lavoie, Local 2009.

Health and Safety and Environment Committee
Christian Comeau, Local 75; Martin Labonté, Local 761; René Émond, Local 894.

Women’s Committee

Cathy St-Amand, Local 1044; Carolina Iacino, Local 6002; Marie-France Fleurantin, Local 62.

Young Workers Committee

François Arseneault, Local 698; Michel Du Cap, Local 6003; Mylène Brault, Local 62.

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) Workers Committee

Pierre De Montigny, Local 6000; Benoît Lapointe, Local 2002; Marcel Trudel, Local 1210.

Aboriginal and Racialized Workers Committee

Luc Léopold Heheng, Local 62; Mohsen Ben Kheder, Local 6000.

Workers with Disabilities Committee

Manon Camiré, Local 2002; Jean Léger, Local 894; Steve Lussier, Local 2002. 

Atlantic Regional Director Lana Payne Nominated as a Woman of Bold Vision


In honour of the 150th anniversary of the Charlottetown Conference where 23 men gathered to create a bold vision for Canada, a coalition of women’s organizations in Prince Edward Island has come together to celebrate the vital role women played and will continue to play in the advancement of our country.

Lana Payne was nominated by her fellow Unifor sisters for this special recognition, which will bring 23 women together to share their visions for Canada’s next 150 years.

“As a trade union leader, feminist and political activist, Lana is always advocating for progressive social change,” said Julie White, Director of the

Women’s Department at Unifor.

“Her commitment to building a better world is contagious and Unifor sisters can think of no one better suited to articulate a new vision for Canada than our own Lana Payne.”

For more information about other distinguished nominees and the conference, visit www.aboldvision.ca. 



Atlantic Regional Director
Lana Payne.

Rally bolsters Toyota campaign

The Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) hosted a rally in Kitchener to support the Toyota workers’ organizing drive, attracting more than 250 supporters from CUPE, Unifor and labour councils in the region.

“When workers organize, it is better for everyone in the community and the community can thrive,” CUPE Ontario

President Fred Hahn told the enthusiastic crowd.

The crowd welcomed the Toyota workers in attendance with a standing ovation.

CUPE National President Paul Moist said his union is doing whatever it can to help the organizing at the Toyota plants.

“These workers are on a journey to bring dignity and fairness to their workplace,

and I encourage them to keep up the hard work,” said Moist. “Toyota workers will be well served by Unifor representing them in the workplace,” he added.

A Toyota worker at the rally said most of the issues brought forward by their campaign team had “nothing to do with money, and everything to do with respect and treatment at

work.”

Unifor National President Jerry Dias pointed out that 89 per cent of Toyota workers around the world are unionized.

“If it is good enough for all the Toyota workers around the world, it’s good enough for Toyota workers in North America,” he said. 