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uniforum



Improving conditions at work often translate to more time with family. Toyota skate day December 29 in Cambridge, Ontario.

PHOTO BY STEVEN MIRIC

Quebec Silicon lockout ends

After more than six months being locked out, Unifor Local 184 members at Quebec Silicon are returning to work. A deal settling the lockout was reached just before Christmas, and ratified by 76 per cent just after.

"This agreement would

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Rights at Work

Unifor has begun holding meetings across the country over the coming weeks to prepare for a nationwide campaign to defend the rights of Canadians in the workplace.

"Unifor is standing up for the rights of Canadians to provide for their families in safe and stable workplaces," said Unifor National President Jerry

Dias, who will be attending all of the meetings. "Unionized or not, we believe that's what all workers want."

At the meetings - which began in Windsor, Ontario, January 13 and finish in St. John's, Newfoundland, on February 27 - local and national Unifor leaders will discuss threats posed to basic labour rights, and what they can do about it.

"Without unions and collective bargaining, it will be impossible for most Canadians to attain a decent, secure life," Dias

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Toyota drive nears vote

The drive for Unifor represent workers at Toyota Motor Manufacturing Canada in Ontario is moving to its next phase, with a vote to unionize looming, says John Aman, Unifor director of organizing.

"We have tremendous support, tremendous momentum," said Aman, adding a vote will be held when support is even

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#unifor

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion


@ODLCPresident: One day soon, the #toyotaworker will see the name of employer & #Unifor flag together. pic.twitter.com/7oXmqKjAIS

@BrittonJim: Unifor standing up for Rights at Work unifor.org/en/whats-new/n... #unifor

In brief

Dupont closure begins

Fourteen members of Unifor Local 28-O left their jobs New Year's Eve as production at the DuPont plant in Maitland, Ontario, winds down. They are leaving as part of a shutdown of the plant announced by the company more than a year ago. The final closure is February 28.

The union negotiated a severance package of two weeks per year. Dupont began producing performance polymers, a form of nylon pellets used in injection moulding, at its Maitland plant in the mid-1980s. 

Abbott closes

For the last few workers at this city's Abbott Laboratories plant, December 20 marked the last day of a slow winding down of the facility more than three years after the company announced its closure.

Three years ago, 157 people worked at the facility making Ensure nutritional supplements and Similac baby formula. About 29 remained on the last day.


The factory was originally scheduled to close in the fall of 2012, but remained open another year due to increased short-term demand for the facility's products. 

Photo spotlight

SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS TO COMMUNICATIONS@UNIFOR.ORG



PHOTO BY GAVIN MCGARRIGLE

The Grinch who stole Christmas made an appearance at Vancouver's Pacific Centre Mall along with dozens of carollers in support of laid off cleaners, December 21.



PHOTO BY: JOSEPH COMEAU

Unifor held a support rally for striking workers at three Saint John, New Brunswick radio stations, December 13.

Energy and environment strategy endorsed

Delegates to Unifor's recent Ontario Council meeting unanimously supported a call to develop a national energy and environmental strategy for Canada, to ensure that our energy resources are developed in a way that maximizes environmental sustainability and the creation of good, stable jobs in Canada.

The recommendation outlines several principles for a progressive energy and environmental strategy for Canada, including the need to manage future energy expansion in line with clear and binding limits on greenhouse gas emissions; requirements for made-in-Canada upgrading and refining, and greater use of Canadian-made inputs and services; and the completion of a Canada-wide energy grid.

The recommendation calls on government to begin a national dialogue, engaging all stakeholders:

workers, business, environmental NGOs, First Nations, and federal and provincial governments. It also endorsed the Unifor National Executive Board's call for a moratorium on unconventional fracking, until environmental and First Nations concerns associated with that new technology have been fully addressed.

The full recommendation is available www.unifor.org.


The goal of developing a national energy and environmental strategy will be taken up by Unifor's new Energy Council, to be constituted in coming months by delegates from all energy-related locals in the union. Unifor hopes to present its strategy to Canada's premiers next year.

Participants in the floor debate over the recommendation included Lana Payne (Unifor Atlantic Director), Scott Doherty

(Unifor Western Director), and Unifor National Executive member Angela Adams (Secretary-Treasurer of Unifor Local 707A in Fort McMurray), all of whom attended the Ontario Council as observers and supported the recommendation. That input demonstrated Unifor's ability to pull together working people from all sectors, in all regions of Canada.

Ontario Regional Director Katha Fortier heralded the recommendation as an example of the careful, consensus-building approach to energy and environmental issues that will be needed in order to win the reforms we need.


For further information on Unifor's efforts in this area, see:

http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/documents/document/pipeline_primer_updated.pdf 

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said. "The current attack by governments across Canada on our basic labour rights will fundamentally damage our quality of life – and that's why we are determined to stop it."

The Harper government's Bill C525 would make it easier to decertify unions in the federal sector, on the basis of biased voting rules. In Ontario, Conservative Leader Tim Hudak wants to eliminate the Rand Formula, while Alberta's Conservatives have made it illegal for some unions to even talk about striking.

For a complete list of the meeting times and locations go to: http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/attachments/19-city_tour_2014.pdf 

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not have been possible without the determination of Local 184's members and the unwavering support of all Unifor and Metalworkers locals in the Bécancour industrial park. The solidarity shown by Unifor leaders and members across Canada as well as by the unions affiliated with the Quebec Federation of Labour was another major factor," said Joseph Gargiso, assistant director of Unifor Quebec, and Jean Simoneau, president of Local 184.

Concessions demanded by the employer were withdrawn. The four-year contract includes a wage

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greater.

"There have been two applications in the past (to unionize Toyota) filed and withdrawn because there was not enough support, we want to ensure we don't have the same issues."


The drive, which has been going on for several months, paused over the holiday season during the plant shutdown.

Unifor has heard loud and clear from workers that they need a voice on the shop floor regarding issues such as pensions, wages and benefits, health and safety issues, getting time off the job and addressing workload concerns, to name a few.

There are enough cards signed for a vote to be held,

freeze for the first two years and an increase of 2.75 per cent starting on November 1, 2016, as well as improvements to wage premiums.


A defined benefit pension plan was negotiated, and all employees will be able to take advantage of the QFL's member-funded pension plan, with the employer contributing 10.5 per cent the first two years and 11.5 per cent thereafter. The company previously operated two pension plans simultaneously – a defined contribution plan and a defined benefit plan.

Operations will resume gradually, with nearly all unionized employees back to work by the end of January. The 145 members had been locked out since May 3, 2013. 



Fun was had at the family skate time organized for Toyota workers over the holidays December 29.

but efforts will now focus on deepening the support among the men and women who work at Toyota in Cambridge and Woodstock.

"We are trying to get as much support as possible to ensure we are successful, it is a numbers game." 

Going Green

If you want to keep getting a copy of the newsletter in the mail, you need to let us know. Simply email the Unifor Communications department at communications@unifor.org, call 1-800-268-5763, ext 3771, or send us a note to Unifor Communications, 205 Placer Court, Toronto, ON M2H 3H9.

Sign up for the email Uniforum at <http://www.unifor.org/en/whats-new/subscribe>.

Can work be safe when home isn't?


Western University and the labour movement in Canada have joined forces to launch the first ever nation-wide survey on the impact of domestic violence in Canadian workplaces.

American research studies have shown that a quarter of employees have experienced domestic violence, and 70 per cent of those experiencing domestic violence have had it follow them in to their workplace.

While we expect the statistics are similar here in

Canada, there has been no research done that could provide us with quantitative evidence.

You can help - Be part of this historic initiative to collect much-needed Canadian data.

Anyone 15 years or older, whether or not they have experienced violence, can participate in the survey. To learn more about the project, download a workplace poster or fill out the anonymous survey, visit www.unifor.org/women. 

CAN WORK BE SAFE WHEN HOME ISN'T?



Help us learn more about the impact of domestic violence in the workplace.

New appointments

Service

Martin Dugas President of Unifor Local 414 appointed as a service representative working at our Rimouski, Quebec office effective November 3.

Steeve St. Pierre President of Unifor Local 136 appointed as a service representative working at our Trois Rivières, Quebec office effective Sunday, December 8.

Gina Smoke President of Unifor Local 816M appointed as a service

representative working at our Winnipeg, Manitoba office effective Sunday, December 15.

Michelle Arruda President of Unifor Local 6004 appointed as a service representative working out of our Ottawa, Ontario office effective Sunday, January 5.

Dennis McGee President Unifor Local 1520 appointed as a temporary service representative working out of our London, Ontario office effective Sunday, December 15.


Carl Proulx national representative from Rouyn, Quebec will be transferred to Gatineau as service representative.

Gary Healey national representative from St. John's, Newfoundland will be transferred to Halifax as a service representative.

Toronto office.

Ian Boyko has been appointed western regional communications representative working out of our New Westminster office effective Sunday, January 12, 2014.

Skilled Trades Co-ordinators

John Breslin National Co-ordinator appointed to our skilled trades department working out of our Toronto office effective Sunday, January 5. 

Communications

Sarah Blackstock has been appointed as Communications Director effective Sunday, February 9, 2013, working out of our

New labour talk show

Unifor Local 444 in Windsor, Ontario, has launched an innovative new TV show examining labour issues in Canada.

Labour talk, hosted by Local 444 member Kara Browning, is available in the Windsor area on CFTV34 out of nearby Leamington, and across the country on Bell Satellite channel 586.

"It's an innovative concept, and maybe other locals could copy it," said Gord Gray Local 444 Public

Relations Director.

The show is written and produced by Local 444 members, and airs every two weeks in 30-minute episodes.

The first show featured an interview with retired CAW National President Ken Lewenza talking about his career and his future.

The second show features an interview with Local 444 President Dino Chiodo, who is also chair of the Ontario Region Council.

To see the shows online,



PHOTO BY GORD GRAY

Wayne MacLean, Local 444 education committee chairperson and Labour Talk producer (left), Local 444 President and Ontario Chair Dino Chiodo, show host Kara Browning and Local 444 vice-president Mike Lovric on the set of Labour Talk.

go to: www.we-tv.ca/labour-talk.html. The show's Facebook page is at: <https://www.facebook.com/#!/LabourTalk>.

Upcoming episodes will feature activists from the labour movement, United Way, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and more. 

Canada Post cuts shocking


Unifor National President Jerry Dias pledged to campaign against dramatic planned cuts in Canada Post services, including the complete elimination of door-to-door delivery. "This is a devastating announcement that will hurt millions of Canadians and cripple an important public institution," Dias said. He pointed out that senior

citizens and many other Canadians depend on door-to-door delivery. He also noted the opposition expressed by many municipalities to the construction of new super-mailboxes in existing neighbourhoods. He promised Unifor's support for community groups, seniors' organizations, municipalities, and the Canadian Union of Postal

Workers in their efforts to defend the quality of postal service.

"Access to affordable, accessible postal services, no matter where you live or how mobile you are, is an important democratic right. Canada Post is not a business, it is a public service. There is no economic justification for these dramatic cutbacks, it's just another dimension

of needless austerity."

"The company has lost money only once since the turn of the century. Dismal forecasts are being used though to scare Canadians into giving an important, legitimate service." Dias agreed that the Post Office must change its operations to reflect changes in communication technology, but not a radical downsizing. 

GOVERNMENT BENEFITS 2014
as of January 1, 2014



Canada Pension Plan and Quebec Pension Plan	CPP	QPP
1. Contribution Rate	4.95%	5.175%
2. Year's maximum pensionable earnings (YMPE)	\$52,500.00	\$52,500.00
3. Basic exemption	\$3,500.00	\$3,500.00
4. Maximum premiums for employees	\$2,425.50	\$2,535.75
Maximum premiums for self-employed	\$4,851.00	\$5,071.50
5. Retirement Benefits (maximum for new recipient)	\$1,038.33	\$1,038.33
6. Lump Sum Death Benefit (max.)	\$2,500.00	\$2,500.00
7. Disability (max.)	\$1236.35	\$1,236.32
8. Dependent children's benefit	\$230.72	\$230.72
9. Surviving spouse 65 and over (max.)	\$623.00	\$623.00
10. Surviving spouse under 65 (max.)	\$567.91	N/A
Surviving spouse 45-64 (max.)	N/A	\$846.94
Surviving spouse under 45 (max.) - not disabled, no child	N/A	\$506.56
- not disabled, with child	N/A	\$814.23
- disabled	N/A	\$846.94

Unemployment Insurance (E.I.)	Canada (excl. Quebec)	Quebec
1. Annual insurable earnings (max.)	\$48,600.00	\$48,600.00
2. Premiums – annual maximum (employee)	\$913.68	\$743.58
Premiums – annual maximum (employer)	\$1,279.15	\$1,041.01
3. Benefits – weekly maximum (55% of insurable earnings)	\$514.00	\$514.00

Old Age Security (effective January 1, 2014 –adjusted quarterly)	Maximum Monthly
1. Old Age Security	\$551.54
2. Guaranteed Income Supplement	\$747.86
3. Spouse's allowance (Age 60-64)	\$1047.43
4. Widowed spouse's allowance (Age 60-64)	\$1172.65

Consumer Price Index

Publication dates for the CPI during the calendar year 2014 as it relates to your cost-of-living formulas under your collective agreement.

Month	Publication Date	Month	Publication Date	Month	Publication Date
Dec/13	Jan 24/14	Apr/14	May 23/14	Aug/14	Sept 19/14
Jan/14	Feb 21/14	May/14	June 20/14	Sept/14	Oct 17/14
Feb/14	Mar 21/14	June/14	July 18/14	Oct/14	Nov 21/14
Mar/14	Apr 17/14	July/14	Aug 22/14	Nov/14	Dec 19/14

Workers Compensation

Province	Percentage of Earnings	2014 Maximum Insurable Earnings/ Maximum Compensation Rate
Alberta	90% (net)	\$92,300
British Columbia	90% (net)	\$77,900
Manitoba	90% (net)	See Note*
New Brunswick	85% (net)	\$60,100
Newfoundland/Labrador	80% (net)	\$60,760
NTW/Nunavut	90% (net)	\$84,200
Nova Scotia	75% (net) 1 st 26 weeks then 85% (net)	\$56,000
Ontario	85% (net)	\$84,100
Prince Edward Island	80% (net) 1 st 38 weeks then 85% (net)	\$51,100
Quebec	90% (net)	\$69,000
Saskatchewan	90% (net)	\$59,000
Yukon	75% (gross)	\$83,501

Note: * Manitoba has a "maximum insurable earnings" for 2014 of \$119,000 for the purposes of calculating the premium that an employer has to pay but there is no "maximum compensation rate" when calculating a claimant's wage loss.

Extreme caution should be used when comparing these numbers as the information is not directly comparable between WCBs.