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# uniforum



Three past presidents of Unifor Local 598 in Sudbury joined current president Anne-Marie MacInnis for a recent Rights at Work meeting in the local's hall. They are, left to right, Dwight Harper, MacInnis, Richard Paquin and Rick Grylls.

## Two-person crews unsafe

In a landmark ruling, two-person armoured car crews have been declared unsafe by a federal health and safety officer after an exhaustive investigation.

"This ruling upholds what we have been saying - that two-person crews are unsafe for the crew

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## BC Council February 7

Unifor activists from across British Columbia will gather in downtown Vancouver to meet as a Regional Council for the first time since the formation of the union.

Over 150 delegates will meet to strategize about campaigns, elect the 2014-2015 Executive Board and populate committees.

"This is a very exciting time for our union," said Scott Doherty, Unifor's

Western Regional Director.

"Rank-and-file members are the heart and soul of Unifor. Our Regional Council meetings are a chance for activists to shape the future of the union."

Delegates will be discussing how to expand workers' rights, protect collective bargaining, and grow Unifor. The agenda includes presentations on the union's current projects such as the Good Jobs Summit and forming community chapters.

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## Dias meets Selinger

Unifor National President Jerry Dias met with Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger on January 27 and urged him to do all he can for working people in the province, and across Canada.

"Working people across this country are being challenged like never before, and we need premiers like Greg Selinger to stand up for them, and

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## #unifor

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion


@UniforLocal598: Inspiring words from @JerryPDias during #RightsAtWork tour stop in #sudbury @UniforTheUnion

@Fairwagesnow: Unifor urges Ontario Government to make meaningful increase... cnw.ca/x28m via @CNWNews @UniforTheUnion #14now #onpoli

## In brief

### Armada deal ratified


Unifor members at Armada Toolworks who were locked out 10 days before Christmas have ratified a new collective agreement giving them wage increases and improvements in other areas.

Armada Toolworks of Lindsay, Ontario, locked out its workers on December 15, but a contract extension put the workers back on the job before Christmas. In a deal ratified by a 97 per cent majority on January 19, all members will see their salaries increase to more than \$15 an hour by December- up from \$14.26. 

### Sterling ratifies

Unifor members at Sterling Marine Fuel, Unifor Local 444, ratified a four-year deal January 25.

The deal includes a three per cent increase each year for the next four years, better benefits, improvements to pensions and signing bonuses. There were also job security language improvements in terms of outsourcing, she said.

Sterling workers fuel many of the ships passing through Windsor 

## Photo spotlight

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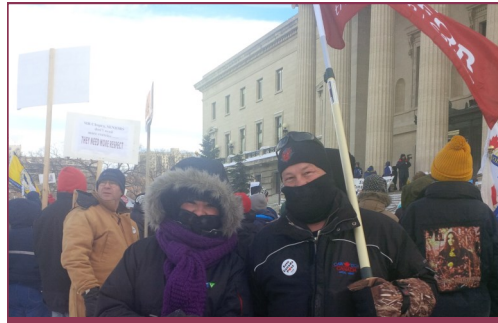


PHOTO BY PAUL MCKIE

Unifor National Representatives Gina Smoke and Frank Wright rally for home delivery at the Manitoba Legislature on January 25.



PHOTO BY STUART LAIDLAW

Unifor National President Jerry Dias discussed Rights at Work with local leaders in Winnipeg on January 27.

## Unifor mourns Jerry Cooper

Unifor offers condolences to the family of a Suncor oil sands worker and Unifor Local 707A member found dead at his Fort McMurray workplace on January 19.

"A tragedy such as this saddens us all, and reminds us how precious and fragile life can be," said Unifor National President Jerry Dias.


Jerry Cooper, who had

been with the company for 13 years, was reported missing early on the morning of January 19. The 40-year-old tailings operator was found hours later submerged in a soft area of the sand dump, and was pronounced dead at the scene.

"All of our thoughts and prayers are with this man's family and coworkers," said

Scott Doherty, Unifor's Western Region Director.

Dias said Unifor is committed to working with Alberta Occupational Health and Safety as they investigate the incident.

"We will do whatever we can to assist in the investigation. It's our goal to make all workplaces as safe as possible," Dias said. 

## First meeting of Unifaith

Clergy and other faith workers of the United Church of Canada and their families marked the official launch of their new union January 14. The group held the inaugural meeting of the Unifor Unifaith Community Chapter that will aim to unite and mobilize members across the country.

The meeting welcomed new members, adopted a set of founding bylaws and conducted the election of the community chapter's

first executive board.

Former CAW president Buzz Hargrove, Unifor representatives and other well-wishers attended the meeting.

"We have spent many years interacting with hundreds of people in paid accountable service to the church and we believe in the need to organize to provide support and representation to our members," says Rev. Jim Evans, Unifaith's interim president in advance of the

meeting. "Now we've got a formal body of solidarity, and we can continue to build it."

Since 2004, Evans and volunteers from the United Church have been educating colleagues and laity in self-care and social unionism, researching pensions, benefits and church closures, working with colleagues suffering isolation and bullying and getting union cards signed.

For more information go to [www.unifaith.ca](http://www.unifaith.ca) 

UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS: SHANNON DEVINE, KATIE ARNUP AND STUART LAIDLAW

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The Regional Council will also hear from Local 111 about its campaign to win the upcoming Metro Vancouver referendum on public transit.

Keynote speakers include BC Federation of Labour President Jim Sinclair, Vancouver District Labour Council President Joey Hartman, and Member of Parliament for Burnaby-Douglas Kennedy Stewart. 

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that's exactly what I told him," Unifor National President Jerry Dias said after the meeting.

At a time when the federal government and other provinces are attempting to weaken workers' rights, Dias emphasized to Selinger that he's in a unique position to reverse the trend by doing more for working people.

Dias was in Winnipeg




Unifor National President Jerry Dias met with Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger on January 27 in the premier's office.

for the first western stop in a series of meetings across Canada to prepare for a nationwide Rights at Work campaign in the spring.

Dias urged Selinger to bring in anti-scab legislation and union certification when more than half of employees in a workplace sign union cards.

Dias warned that efforts by Ontario conservatives to

eliminate the Rand Formula will put pressure on other jurisdictions to do the same, while the Harper government's Bill C525 would make it easier to decertify unions due to biased voting rules. In Alberta, Conservatives have made it illegal for some unions to simply talk about striking 

## Going Green

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members and the public," said Unifor National President Jerry Dias. Dias has requested a meeting with federal Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney to discuss safety in the armoured car industry.

The January 22 ruling comes after a Brinks messenger in Peterborough, Ontario, refused to carry cash to and from an automated teller machine without a guard, saying it was unsafe for him to carry the money alone while the other crew member stayed in the truck.

"The diminished ability of a 'one-off' crew to monitor for the risk of

exposure to the known hazard of assault and injury during a robbery attempt while servicing a front loading ATM machines and during travel to and from the truck constitutes a danger," health and safety officer Bob Tomlin said in his ruling.

A two-person crew was robbed January 20 at Toronto's Fairview Mall. No one was hurt in the ensuing shootout, but the robbery demonstrates the dangers faced by workers and the public, and highlights the need for minimum employee training, vehicle specifications, crew complements and safety equipment.

For more information go to, go to [www.unifor.org/safecargo](http://www.unifor.org/safecargo) 


## Unifor supports local programming

In a submission to the CRTC, Unifor is calling on the commission to require broadcasters to dedicate more of the tangible benefits from any merger or takeover to enhancing local programming.

"Local programming (whether television or radio), acts as a bridge between citizens and community life. Local news programming, specifically, offers an important window into local affairs and is essential to a vibrant local democracy, community and culture," the submission reads.

The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission is reviewing its

policies for how the tangible benefits from a merger or takeover in the broadcast industry are allocated. Unifor is calling for more of those benefits to be used to support local programming, both news and locally produced non-news shows.

The absence of a strong local programming policy has had a big economic and employment impact on the industry, including an estimated 1,854 lost jobs over the past six years. The job losses began to stabilize with creation of the Local Programming Improvement Fund in 2010, but that is scheduled to be phased out by August 31, 2014. 



## Sign the CPP petition today

The Canada Pension Plan is the best way to strengthen the retirement income of all Canadians, which is why Unifor is urging all members to sign an online Canadian Labour Congress petition calling for an expanded CPP.

"The Canada Pension Plan is well-run, provides stable retirement incomes for life and benefits are indexed to inflation," said Jo-Ann Hannah, Unifor's director of pensions and benefits.


The plan, however, was set up in the 1960s with the intention that it supplement workplace pension plans.

Employers are abandoning their responsibility to provide pensions to their employees. More than 12 million Canadian workers have no workplace pension, and many more have an inadequate one.

Today, the retirement income of many Canadians is at serious risk.

The best way to address

that challenge, Hannah said, is to improve the CPP (and the Quebec Pension Plan) so that all Canadians – with or without a workplace pension – can have a more secure pension in retirement.

To get more information and to sign the petition, go to: <http://www.canadianlabour.ca/action-center/pension-fairness> 

## New Appointments

### Research

Jordan Brennan – appointed as Economist working in research in the Toronto office effective immediately.

### Communications

Shelley Burgoyne – appointed as the Atlantic regional communications representative working in the Halifax office effective February 9. 

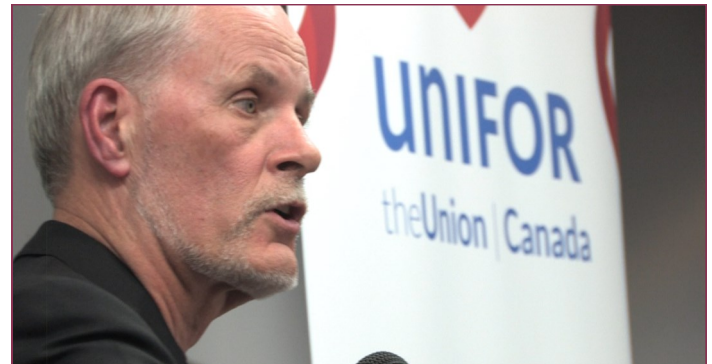
## Vancouver town hall

More than 50 transit operators and their allies attended a town hall meeting at the Unifor offices in New Westminster on January 9.

Local 111 members at Coast Mountain were spurred into action by Premier Christy Clark's declaration that future transit funding for the Metro Vancouver's regional transit authority—Translink—will be determined by a

referendum next fall. Many activists fear that a referendum is doomed to fail without proper planning and outreach.

Simon Fraser University urban renewal and transportation planning professor Gordon Price said that Vancouver's transit system has not kept pace with population growth. He said that a negative referendum result will have ramifications for decades, but transit advocates face



Simon Fraser University professor Gordon Price says transit activists face a tough referendum fight.

an uphill battle to win the referendum because of Translink's unpopularity. Price said that the BC government's current

approach lacks vision and pits regions and neighbourhoods against one another for political gain. 

## Air Canada pension healthier

Air Canada says preliminary reports on the funded status of its pension plan are expected to show favourable results for January 1, 2014, including the possible elimination of its \$3.7 billion shortfall. The final report will be completed later in the year.

For years, funding shortfalls in the AC pension plan have left members and retirees concerned about the security of their

pension and created a difficult environment for collective bargaining.

"Today's news shows that Unifor has been justified in our efforts to maintain the defined benefit pension plan despite constant pressure from the company and the government to end it," said Unifor National President Jerry Dias. "We're pleased that Air Canada CEO Calin Rovinescu wants to ensure that the pension funding

remains secure and that the deficit is eliminated. That's also our priority and we intend hold Air Canada to their commitment.

Dias said that members, particularly new hires, have made sacrifices to maintain the pension plan. "We need to ensure that all parties, including Air Canada, act prudently going forward to safeguard retirement security."

Air Canada has

indicated that it will continue the legally required fixed contributions to the plan.

Air Canada reported several factors contributing to the improved pension funded status: an increase in the discount rate (which reduces liabilities); improved investment return on assets; negotiated benefit reductions; and company contributions to the plan. 