



Campaigns are key  
>> page 2

Also inside: Forestry plan  
needed  
>> page 4



VOLUME 2, NO.3

[WWW.UNIFOR.ORG](http://WWW.UNIFOR.ORG)

FEBRUARY 13, 2014

# uniforum



Unifor National President Jerry Dias and BC Council Chair Andrea MacBride share a light moment at the BC Regional Council meeting.

## BC Council meets

Unifor's B.C. Regional Council held its inaugural meeting in February, with nearly 200 delegates, guests, and staff gathering to shape the work of the union over the coming year.

Top of mind for the February 7-9 meeting were jobs, especially for young people, protecting the rights of workers and using

>> Continued on page 3

## Pension surplus belongs to workers

The Supreme Court of Canada has upheld a lower court ruling that the pension surplus of \$43.3-million from employee contributions that existed when the former Manitoba Telephone System (MTS) was privatized in 1997, belonged to the workers

and retirees, and must be repaid.

Unifor (formerly the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union) Local 7 has been fighting this case, along with the Telecommunication Employees Association of Manitoba Inc. (TEAM), the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) and a group of retirees, since 1997.

In January, the Supreme Court unanimously concluded that MTS wrongfully made use of the initial surplus as MTS

>> Continued on page 3

## 'Anywhere, anytime'

Unifor National President Jerry Dias has invited Ontario Progressive Conservative Party Leader Tim Hudak to a debate "anywhere, anytime" over Hudak's proposals to gut labour laws in the province.

"I have been through your plan, and quite simply the numbers just don't add up," Dias wrote in his letter to Hudak on

>> Continued on page 3

## #unifor

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion

@YouthAndWork: Good on @UniforTheUnion for recognizing the need to organize around good jobs for young workers. See [unifor.org/en/whats-new/n...](http://unifor.org/en/whats-new/n...) #canlab #cdnpoli


@RethinkLabour: Peter Kennedy on how @UniforTheUnion is redefining the Canadian labour movement: [unifor.org/en/whats-new/n...](http://unifor.org/en/whats-new/n...) #canlab #cdnpoli #unifor

## In brief

### Oakville transit deal


Oakville transit workers, members of Unifor Local 1256, ratified a tentative contract agreement giving the almost 200 members a four-year deal with no concessions and wage and benefit improvements in each year.

The employer began talks with a long list of concessions such as contracting out, elimination of sick days and seniority rights.

A Woman's Advocate program was set up for the workplace, with training paid for by the employer. Most of the members are transit drivers and maintenance. 

### Scallop compensation

The FFAW has reached a landmark agreement with Nalcor Energy to compensate scallop harvesters in the Strait of Belle Isle affected by the installation of underwater cable to bring power to Newfoundland.

Nalcor agreed to a \$2.6 million lump sum, plus 15 per cent for administrative costs. FFAW will administer the fund by providing annual payouts for a 30-year period. 

## Photo spotlight: BC Regional Council

SUBMIT YOUR PHOTOS TO [COMMUNICATIONS@UNIFOR.ORG](mailto:COMMUNICATIONS@UNIFOR.ORG)



PHOTO BY STUART LAIDLAW

Ranjit Rai of Local 3000 thanks members for support in the cleaners' dispute.



PHOTO BY IAN BOYKO

Council meetings are a chance to build solidarity.

### Bring your family

The Unifor Family Education Program is your chance to take your family on vacation to Unifor's beautiful Port Elgin Family Education Centre on the shores of Lake Huron.

You will meet people from across Canada, learn about our new union and issues facing families, all while enjoying one of the


most beautiful sunsets in the world.

Members and families can apply to attend one of these one-week Saturday-to-Saturday sessions: June 28 to July 5, July 5 to 12, July 26 to August 2, or August 2 to 9.

Accommodations, meals and programs are covered by the National Union. Those travelling

more than 500 kilometres will be provided with flights or mileage. Members use vacation time to attend.

For details visit: <http://www.unifor.org/en/member-services/education/family-education-program>

The registration deadline is March 28, 2014. See your local union for an application. 

### Campaigns key to Unifor's future

Unifor's campaigns for good jobs and to protect and expand labour rights in Canada will define this new union, Western Director Scott Doherty told the first meeting of the BC Regional Council.

That work has already begun, he said, with Unifor holding meetings across the country with members and local leaders.

"We are starting a dialogue in the regions, talking to members and reinforcing old bonds," Doherty said in his opening address to the meeting.

A big part of that is the current leadership tour,

with stops in 19 cities across Canada to set the stage for the Rights at Work Campaign in the spring to counter conservative attacks on labour rights, he said.


As well, there will be a Good Jobs Summit in the fall, to be preceded by a series of local forums across Canada gathering input from youth groups, business leaders and progressive groups on their ideas for creating good jobs.

"We will invite anyone who wants to come and talk about ways to turn Mc-jobs into good jobs,"

Doherty said.

Unifor, he said, will continue to work to improve the lives of all Canadians, whether members of the union or not.


"We have to prove ourselves worthy of the respect of British Columbians and all Canadians by demanding good jobs for all," he said.

Unifor is also committed to playing an active role in the coming referendum on public transit in the Vancouver area, because a strong transit system is vital to a healthy city, Doherty said. 

UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS

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

>> Continued from  
**“Pension surplus ”**  
 on page 1

received the full benefit of the surplus and the members received nothing. “This is a great day and a long time coming for the unionized workers at MTS a 17-year battle to wrestle back from a corporation, money that belonged to the workers,” said Paul McKie, Unifor National Representative. “Many people in the three unions, the retiree’s group, our legal team, worked tirelessly to get justice for our MTS members and their pension.” “This decision is a strong indication from the highest court in the country that pension surpluses cannot be used as corporate slush funds,” said Unifor National President Jerry Dias. “It reinforces the idea that pensions are a deferred wage, agreed to as part of a contract promised to the worker for their efforts.” 

>> Continued from  
**“Anywhere any time”**  
 on page 1

February 3. Hudak has promoted legislation that would curtail workplace rights for Ontario. Research by Unifor, however, shows that U.S. states that have brought in such laws have seen a race to the bottom, with lower wages, unsafe workplaces and less money spent on schools and health. All that, and with no difference in manufacturing job creation, Dias said in his letter. “No one wants that for Ontario,” Dias wrote. The letter from Dias follows an advertisement that ran in the Toronto Sun and the Niagara Falls Review over the previous weekend, inviting Hudak to a debate about his party’s labour laws proposals. “With some good ideas, we can do better for Ontario,” the ad reads. In his letter, Dias points



**National President Jerry Dias has challenged Ontario PC Leader Tim Hudak to a debate.**

t out hat it would be far better for the two leaders to get together and debate the issue face-to-face. “I am prepared to meet you anywhere, any time to

debate this important issue,” Dias wrote. To view the newspaper ad, please visit: [www.unifor.org/rights](http://www.unifor.org/rights) 

**Do you want to continue receiving Uniforum?**

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](mailto: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.

To sign up for the email version of Uniforum visit: <http://www.unifor.org/subscribe>

>> Continued from  
**“BC Council meets”**  
 on page 1


Canadian resources to create sustainable jobs. “Canadians don’t benefit from pipelines that ship unrefined oil to other countries, plain and simple,” Unifor National President Jerry Dias told delegates. “Keystone XL, Northern Gateway, Kinder Morgan all have one thing in common: they steal Canada’s natural resource wealth and leave us with nothing to show for it.” The council unanimously supported a national energy and environment strategy calling for Canadian oil to



**Delegates to BC Regional Council elected their first executive. For the full list of those elected see BC executive elected on page 4.**

be used for Canadian needs, while protecting the environment, introducing strict greenhouse gas limits and respect for First Nation rights. Delegates voted to support Unifor’s campaign to defend the Rand Formula, including

participating in the current leadership tour, and to take part in next fall’s Good Jobs Summit and to sponsor forums and other events in their communities. BC locals were also encouraged to play an active role in the labour movement and their

communities by affiliating with the BC Federation of Labour and taking an active role in upcoming municipal elections. A list of Unifor-made products is to be produced, based on input from locals about the products their members produce. 

## BC executive elected

Unifor BC Regional Council elected its first executive and members of seven committees February 7-9 in Vancouver.

### Executive Board

**Chair:** Andrea MacBride, Local 2000  
**Vice-Chair:** Nathan Woods, Local 111  
**Secretary-Treasurer:** Bill Gaucher, Local 114  
**Members at Large:** Reg Meisner, Local 1115; James Monks, Local 433; Jamie

Ross, Local 2002; Jean Van Vliet, Local 3000.

Two committees were elected by the entire Council meeting:

### Political Action Committee

Don Rheaume, Local 1119; Ben Williams, Local 333; Barbie Zipp, Local 114.

### Health & Safety and Environment

Gavin Davies, Local 111; Gord McGrath, Local 114; Melissa Moroz, Local 467.

The Council's five equity-seeking committees were elected at caucus meetings of their peers:

### Lesbian, Gay Bisexual, Transgender

Desiree Gill, Local 111; Ron Mill, 3000; Fred Whiting, Local 2002.

### Aboriginal & Racialized Workers

Hopeton Hague, Local 1997; Carlos Moreira, Local 111; Margaret Olal, Local 3000.


### Workers with Disabilities

Paramjit Birak, Local 3000; Scott Hodge, Local 2182; Don Haug, Local 114.

### Women's Committee

Tracy Ingham, Local 603; Brenda Mason, Local 525G; Ranjit Rai, Local 3000.

### Young Worker's Committee

Cody Crick, Local 1115; Simon Lau, Local 2002; Ashleigh Rennie, Local 111. 

## Forestry plan needed

As the largest forestry union in Atlantic Canada, Unifor says a soon-to-be announced forestry plan for New Brunswick could mean a boost to the local economy, the forestry sector and decent jobs for New Brunswickers.

The union is responding to the State of the Province speech by Premier David Alward February 3.

"We're glad to hear Premier Alward recognizes


the forestry sector as an important driver of our economy," said Rino Ouellet, Atlantic Area director, based in Moncton. "We look forward to seeing this new plan, where the Premier has pledged to secure 20,000 jobs for those working in the industry."

Ouellet said that for the plan to work, it must include in the process First Nations people, wood lot



A forestry plan for New Brunswick could help boost employment in the province.

owners, labour, and crown land rights. He also said that to balance the interest of the province, government

must continue to allow for environmentally protected areas. 

## Minimum wage increase falls short

The minimum wage increase announced by Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne is too small and locks in the poverty-level wages of the province's lowest-paid workers, Unifor says.

"A minimum wage of \$11 an hour is still a poverty-level income. Tying it to inflation only ensures it stays below the poverty line," said Unifor National President Jerry Dias.

Wynne announced January 30 that her government will introduce legislation to increase the minimum wage to \$11 an hour (from \$10.25) effective June 1, and to tie future increases to inflation, as an expert panel recommended. The new rate would be announced April 1 of each year and take effect Oct. 1.

Unifor, along with other labour and anti-poverty

groups, has supported a \$14 minimum wage.

Dias said tying the rate to inflation is a good idea, but only if the minimum wage is set at a living wage first. Otherwise, limiting future increases to the inflation rate only ensures that the province's lowest-paid workers will remain in poverty. "The priority needs to be to lift people out of poverty, not making laws that keep them there," Dias

said.

Unifor will continue to push for a \$14 minimum wage in the province, Dias said.

To read Unifor's submission to the Minimum Wage Advisory Panel, please visit: [http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/attachments/submission\\_to\\_ontarios\\_minimum\\_wage\\_review\\_panel.pdf](http://www.unifor.org/sites/default/files/attachments/submission_to_ontarios_minimum_wage_review_panel.pdf) 