



21 NEWS/VIEWS

Membership Meeting – 2nd Tuesday of each Month
7:30 pm – Italian Club – 2148 Connaught Street

2009 NEWSLETTER - EDITION #2

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Table Officers

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Chris Szakacs

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Ken Kabatoff
Dennis Kreklewich
Steve Frankiewitz

**CUPE National
Representative**
Guy Marsden

Vice President **Greg Moyer** – April 2009 Proposed City of Regina Budget



- Local 21 is concerned about the deliberate policy of the city to not fill vacancies in a timely manner. A **21-year** trend has seen continuous reductions of permanent staff, especially front-line staff. Overall, a **16.1%** decline. Most notably, upper management positions continue to flourish within this corporation.

- A weakened capacity to address infrastructure needs by reducing front-line staff, hiring external consultants and contracting-out. Documents provided to Local 21 show that close to **\$28 million** was spent on contracting out in Public Works alone in 2008.

- Dramatic increases in user fees since 2000. And new sources of funding are still not enough to balance the budget - the city continues to drain its General Reserve Fund.

- Budget documentation state that the unfunded liabilities for sick leave and vacation "were covered through savings from staff vacancies." This is, in reality, downloading the costs of the unfunded liabilities to the employees.

- From Your Executive -

Local 21 is proud of the services it provides to "all" the residents of Regina. We believe that the **quality** and **cost-effectiveness** of these services has been jeopardized by permanent staff reductions, increased levels of contracting-out, higher service fees, and tax policies that shift an increasing majority of the costs to pay for these services onto residential properties.

The residents of the Regina want value for their tax dollar\$. They want a level of services that give "all" a good quality of life. They want to be able to go to parks that are well maintained and safe, they want their streets and sidewalks maintained, and their sewer and water lines repaired. They want green spaces and affordable recreational programs so their kids and their neighbours' kids can develop and play. These public services are what make our community a good place to live.

Local 21 - Commitment to Community

In The City

- **Asbestos:** If you have been exposed to asbestos within your workplace – file an injury/illness claim with your employer. You still have the right to refuse unsafe work within this province.
- **Vacant Executive Position:** Nominations/election will take place during the 9 June 2009 General Meeting.
- **Local 21 Anniversary:** 2009 marks this Union's 75th anniversary.

Collective Bargaining Information

Your Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) will expire **31 December 2009**. A bargaining package is currently being put together. Your Union executive encourages all members to take part in this process and submit a proposal(s) to enhance the CBA.

If you wish to submit and discuss a proposal(s), which may be included in this round of bargaining --- we ask that you show up at one of the monthly general membership meetings **on/or** before **9 June 2009**.

Or ... Submit your proposal(s) via email at: cupe.local21@sasktel.net

Or ... Put it down on paper and drop it off at your Union office.

* This will be an important round of bargaining for this Union. If you have something to add or say – then show up at any general membership meeting **on/or** before **9 June 2009** --- and --- let your voice be heard.

Deadline for proposals --- 9 June 2009

(FYI: Meeting start time may change from time to time – the monthly meeting notice will indicate a correct start time)

General Information & Updates

Regina Civic Pension Plan

Your plan is a good plan (NOT a “rich” plan). Elected employees and appointed employer representatives work together to ensure that the plan always has the funds to pay all promised benefits. Professional advice from lawyers, actuaries and investment consultants keeps the plan current with the changing economic and legal environment.

Contributions must be adjusted from time to time to keep the funding levels adequate. This is a response to changing demographics in the plan and in economic conditions.

The features of your plan are:

- Eligibility** – Earliest date of full retirement is when age + years of service equal 80, or a minimum age of 55 years.
- Bridge Benefit** – An early retirement incentive. It pays an amount from the plan, from your early retirement date until age 65, that is a rough equivalent of what Canada Pension Plan (CPP) + Old Age Security (OAS) will be after age 65.
- Pension Calculation** – Based on your best 3 consecutive years of earnings (annual salary is total gross income as opposed to basic salary).
- Cost of Living Allowance (COLA)** – Pension payments are adjusted annually for the cost of living (50% of consumer price index (CPI) increase up to 4.25%).
- Employer Contributions** – Equals 100% of employee contribution.
- Defined benefit pension plan.
- “The Plan” is jointly trusted with equal representation of employees and employers on the Administrative Board.
- Equal contributions are made by plan members and their employers into the plan fund.

- I. All money in the pension fund is invested according to plan policies with professional investment fund managers and held by a custodian until the money is needed to pay benefits.
- J. The plan adheres to all pension legislation. It monitors the funding level of the plan to ensure that the plan remains fully capable to pay all benefits at any time after they are earned.
- K. Benefits are calculated with a formula that uses years of service x best 3 year wage average x a percentage. A booklet is available from the pension office that describes benefits and options that are available to the members when they retire or terminate.
- L. Pension plan members receive an annual statement that provides the anticipated retirement benefit based on the current salary projected to the earliest date of retirement with unreduced pension.

Unions - Schools For Democracy

Elaine Bernard, Executive Director, Harvard University's Labour/ Work Life Program

A crucial but little-appreciated role of the labour movement is that it builds democratic communities - that's one of the key things that Unions do. By bringing together workers, who have few rights, who are isolated as individuals and often competing against each other, Unions forge a community in the workplace among workers.

They help workers understand that they have rights, and they provide a vehicle for exercising those rights. Beyond the defence and promotion of individual Union members' rights, Unions also provide a collective voice for workers.

They provide a powerful check to the almost total power of management in the workplace. And they fight for the right of workers to participate in decision-making in the workplace. But labour movements and other communities of common interest don't just happen. They have to be consciously constructed, with a lot of hard work, discussion and organization.

Constructing democratic communities in the workplace or anywhere is an ongoing process, rather like democracy. **And, like democracy, it's a process that can be rolled back or reversed.**



Up - Against the Wall

(Essential Services Act – Takes away Workers' Rights in Saskatchewan)

1. The law applies to Unionized workers who work for: the government of Saskatchewan, Crown corporations, rural and urban municipalities, health regions, universities, SIAST, the Cancer agency, and the police - and anyone else Cabinet decides.
2. Your boss gets to designate which workers' are "essential" in the event of a strike.
3. If you are designated "essential" – you have to work during the strike.
4. According to the Act, you will not be allowed to participate in a work stoppage which includes any form of solidarity actions like work-to-rule and picket support to try to improve your working conditions.
5. If you participate in any strike action at all, you can be fined \$2000 + \$400 per day.
6. If you are designated "essential", you have to do all your regular duties of your job, not just the "essential" duties. You may be denied vacation.
7. Healthcare employers are designating up to 95% of workers as "essential".
8. Management can designate your bargaining committees, shop stewards, and your Union activists as essential employees.
9. With that many people who cannot participate in a strike to support collective bargaining, how will Unions get collective agreements?
10. Some province with essential services laws have the option to go to independent, 3rd party arbitrators to get a settlement – **NOT HERE.**

11. Unions have always provided emergency services during strikes and lockouts. There is no need for a law to **FORCE** workers to work during strikes.

12. The Saskatchewan Party says this law is about balancing workers' rights and public safety (what). Unions have never put the public at risk during a strike because Union members are the public too.

13. 95.5% of contracts in the public sector are settled without a strike. Collective bargaining worked fine the way it was. Bill 5 was totally unnecessary.

14. The Supreme Court of Canada has ruled that collective bargaining is protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. Job action, including any work stoppage in support of collective bargaining, ought to be protected as well.

15. Why is the Saskatchewan Party government stripping workers of their human rights?



Saskatchewan Party Premier **Brad Wall** announced Wednesday, 15 April 2009 that he was hiring a South Carolina based law firm of Nelson Mullins Riley & Scarborough LLP to represent Saskatchewan's interests in Washington, D.C. specifically, and in the United States generally. What the Premier neglected to announce is that some of the areas Nelson Mullins specializes in is defeating Union certification drives and advising companies on Union avoidance. Considering that U.S. President Obama supports Unions – was this a good choice?



The Trespass to Property Act (Bill 43) Will Take Away Rights from all Workers & Citizens

1. It will make it illegal for anyone to be on public property without the consent of the Saskatchewan Party government.

2. This includes picketing, demonstrations, marches, rallies and protests anywhere in Saskatchewan.

3. Unlike other provinces, the Bill does not include an exemption for citizens exercising their human and charter rights to freedom of association, freedom of peaceful assembly, and freedom of expression.

4. In essence, this could jeopardize your right to picket, demonstrate and rally in our province.

5. The Saskatchewan Party government has not explained the need for this Act, nor have they provided a response to our concerns.

Saskatchewan Federation of Labour (SFL)

Local 21 Website: www.21.cupe.ca

Union Work – Union Proud