



# FRONTLINE WORKER

21 NEWS / VIEWS

Union Work – Union Proud

2011 NEWSLETTER - EDITION #2

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Membership Meeting: 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday of each Month (5:00 pm – Italian Club – 2148 Connaught St.)

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## Regina Civic Employees to Employers:

### **“Work to protect our pension plan, not gut it”**

Groups representing both in-scope and out-of-scope employees in the Regina Civic Pension Plan want their employers to get work to protect their pension plan, not gut it.

“The City of Regina should be acting on the actuary’s recommendation to raise the contribution rates, while changes are negotiated to secure the plan’s future,” says Kirby Benning, Chair of the Regina Civic Pension and Benefits Committee.

“Instead, the City Manager and employers are ignoring the actuary’s recommendation and blocking our efforts to obtain a second actuarial opinion about the plan’s health,” he says.

The employee groups in the plan are confident a second opinion will show the plan’s funding position is in much better shape than the employers’ claim.

Groups representing employees in the Regina Civic Pension Plan demonstrated their commitment to the plan last December, when they voted **80%** in support of accepting the contribution rate increase. They expected the employers to do the same.

But the employers still have not ratified the increase and the additional funds the actuary said are required to keep the plan healthy have not been paid.

The Regina Civic Pension Plan is a defined benefit plan that covers 3,900 members working for five major employers:

- City of Regina
- Regina Public School Board
- Regina General Hospital
- Regina Public Library
- Buffalo Pound Water Treatment Plant

There are 21 employee groups representing plan members.

## Regina Civic Pension Plan Meeting:

Tuesday May 10 --- 7:30 p.m. --- Regina General Hospital Auditorium --- 1440 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Regina

Sponsored by the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses

## Top News Links

(left click on the link – click on “allow” to open / read)

- Regina Civic Pension Plan [www.reginacivicipensionplan.wordpress.com](http://www.reginacivicipensionplan.wordpress.com)
- Stephen Lewis - credits municipal workers with building a just and compassionate society <http://cupe.ca/privatization-watch-february-2011/stephen-lewis-value-municipal-services>
- Wisconsin Senate Limits Bargaining by Public Workers [http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/10/us/10wisconsin.html?\\_r=2&hp](http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/10/us/10wisconsin.html?_r=2&hp)
- Postal Workers <http://fullcomment.nationalpost.com/2011/04/21/postal-workers-response-to-lorne-gunter-were-still-relevant/>

## CUPE Saskatchewan ---

To challenge Brad Wall's Essential Services Act in the courts



*The case against  
private garbage  
collection ...*

David Rider  
Urban Affairs Bureau Chief

Toronto Star  
thestar.com

Mark Ferguson is president of CUPE Local 416, which includes Toronto's garbage collectors

The 2009 civic workers' strike was a pivotal point for waste workers. It seemed to turn residents against Mayor Miller and the city's workers. Looking back would you have done anything differently? Any regrets?

The 2009 strike was an unfortunate circumstance not just for solid waste workers but for all municipal workers and for the people of Toronto. Unfortunately it was necessary. The unions were negotiating on behalf of their members of course, but also to protect the vital services residents depend on us for. We had to accept an injury and illness plan that wasn't what we wanted and wasn't in the best interests of the people of Toronto. Our bargaining team regrets having to negotiate in the media rather than at the bargaining table.

**The issue of rolling over sick days was particularly galling for residents. Should you have fought so hard for that?**

We were fighting to maintain a system that was fair to workers and fair to the city. Unfortunately we were forced to substitute an 18-day-a-year cumulative plan for one that is 130 days every year (on a short-term disability plan). Our members now don't go on EI sick leave when they are ill or injured; the City now absorbs the entire costs of short- and long-term disability. Yes, we still believe it was in the best interests of everyone to have maintained the former system.

**You say expanding private collection will cost taxpayers more in the long run. How exactly?**

We already know that the cost of collections in Toronto is 30% cheaper than the provincial average, and that includes other municipalities in the GTA where collections are done by private companies. We have saved the City \$4 million a year by bringing the collections of the former City of York back in-house. This has been confirmed by an impartial third party. It is mysterious how, now, the Ford administration claims the same body of work, if contracted-out again, would save the taxpayers \$6 million. I can point to many recent examples of cities saving money by contracting collections back in-house, including the cities of Hamilton, Ottawa, Sherbrooke, Quebec, and Port Moody, B.C., among others.

**Your union is under siege from the mayor's office. What will you do to convince the public, and city council, that contracting out should not be expanded?**

We are aligning ourselves with the public to ensure that the services they are receiving are protected. We are determined that the public assets the City holds, and that the public has paid for, are not squandered and sold off. But rather, are kept in public hands so that our children will have the benefit of the assets we've paid for. You don't burn the furniture to heat the house!

**Are your union members talking about taking action? Work to rule? Wildcats? Day strikes?**

We have no interest in job action; we're here to serve the public and to work with the administration to find further efficiencies throughout the City. The mayor's position is ideological and he has shown no intention to sit down and talk with us so we can find ways, together, to address some of our mutual concerns. We have no interest in fighting with the administration; we'd rather work with them.

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## **Courtenay BC city workers...**

### **...vote to strike for fairness and respect**

April 27... the city workers of Courtenay, represented by CUPE 556, voted **92%** to strike for fairness and respect on the job. Despite huge budget surpluses, exorbitant managerial wages and substantial boosts to private contractor pay, the city workers are frustrated by the employer's argument that they cannot afford to properly compensate city workers.

"Everyone deserves a fair share," says Melissa Moroz, CUPE National representative and negotiator for CUPE 556. "City workers are a proud part of what makes Courtenay work and it only makes sense that they should also be fairly compensated during a time of large budget surpluses and rising costs of living."

CUPE 556 has produced and is distributing a list of **Financial Facts** about the City of Courtenay to help dispel the employer's argument that the refusal to offer a fair contract and support public services is driven by financial concerns. Some interesting facts include:

(left click on the link – click on "allow" to open / read) ➔ <http://www.cupe.bc.ca/sites/default/files/Financial%20facts.pdf>

- In 2010, the actual budget surplus was \$3.6 million, almost \$2 million more than projected.

- Garbage and recycling fees to the public have been increased (5.4% since 2010) to profit the private contractor doing collection (Emterra).
- Senior staff are compensated generously (Administrator, \$170,167 in 2009 with almost \$10,000 in additional expenses) and a disproportionate amount of wage increases go to staff making over \$75,000 a year.
- The 2011 budget once again forecasts a surplus of \$1.93 million.

Courtenay city workers are seeking a 3% increase in every year of the contract, as well as improvements ensuring the fair distribution of work. CUPE 556 represents approximately 80 inside and outside workers in the city of Courtenay.

# Movement for May Day

**When?** Join us Sunday, May 1, 2011.

**Where?** Meet at Victoria Park at 1 p.m. and march to the Legislature!

**Why?** We march for:

• human rights • free collective bargaining • equality • justice for Aboriginal peoples • anti-poverty action plan • public services • quality education • Crown corporations • quality healthcare • affordable housing • and more ...

**Together, let's send a message to our elected officials.** It's time for transparency, accountability, meaningful consultation & government for the people. Bring your family, friends, neighbours & coworkers!

**Attractions include:** Children's fun zone, food, entertainment, including a special performance by the Local Onlyz. Demonstrators are coming from all over the province.

**For more information:** contact Cara at prairielilies@gmail.com to reserve bus seats from your community.

## Local 21 Spring Dance & Supper

**Date:** Friday, May 13, 2011

**Location:** Italian Club

Contact Darren Fox at: **535-7255**

Union office at: **352-8282**

(Tickets: \$5.00 Members ----- \$10.00 Guests)

### Main Door Prizes:

**BBQ** (up to a 400.00 value)

**Patio Set** (up to a 400.00 value)

**Bench Swing** (250-350 value)

**New Local 21 clothing**