

July 2010

ON THE LINE



"Harry retires today...10...9...8...7...6..."



2010 Retirees to Date

- Blaine Borys – Senior Process Operator – 34 Years Service
- Richard Whitford – Haulage Driver – 33 Years Service
- Don DeRosa – Heavy Duty Mech – 37 Years Service
- Wayne Desteur – Steel Fabricator- 36 Years Service
- Ludwik Oleksow – Millwright – 34 Years Service
- Harold Reese – Driller – 35 Years Service
- Ken Ho – Heavy Duty Mech – 33 Years Service
- Reg Kennedy – Carpenter – 33 Years Service
- Art Klassen – Warehouseman – 33 Years Service
- Harvey Wilson – Electrician – 32 Years Service
- Ivan Horvat – Millwright – 35 Years Service
- Dave Ono – Auto Mechanic – 32 Years Service
- Doug Rushton – Equipment Op – 32 Years Service
- Steve Rolan – Equipment Op – 32 Years Service

- *Bob Murphy – Electrician – 31 Years Service*
- *Denis Gunning – Shovel Operator – 31 Years Service*
- *Mike Murray – Shovel Operator – 31 Years Service*
- *Corrinne Wilcox – Driller – 31 Years Service*
- *Fred Gumowsky – Loader Op – 30 Years Service*
- *Bill Frolic – Warehouseman – 30 Years Service*
- *Robin Drijber – Electrician – 30 Years Service*
- *Frank Curtis – Haulage Dr. – 29 Years Service*
- *Bruce Baker – Driller – 31 Years Service*
- *Dana Chanasyk – Driller – 33 Years Service*
- *Mel Donald – Senior process Op – 28 Years Service*
- *Malakai Mara – Haulage Driver – 29 Years Service*

The Union Executive Congratulates all the above noted Retirees and wishes them and their families a Long and Happy Retirement.

USW Local 7884 would also like to welcome all the new members working at Fording River. The Membership of Local 7884 can rely on the strong and Democratic Leadership of their elected committees and Local Executive.

Every Steelworker has a voice and a vote because it's the members who run the union.

Local 7884 are continuously working on improving job security, making it a Healthier and Safer place to work, and addressing issues pertaining to our membership. We have been able to bargain one of the best Collective Agreements in Canada. Choosing the Steelworkers means joining 250,000 other members in the most diverse private sector union in Canada

***If you have not signed your Union Card,
Please stop by the Union Hall***

If your Union Card is not signed you are not entitled to all of our Benefits.

Contractors on Site - Klemke (KMC) Mining

You have all noticed the Contractors mining equipment working on our site. We have been informed by the company that KMC will be on our site until the end of the year. Their main objective will be to extract waste and coal from areas in brownie and Henrietta where it is more economical for smaller equipment to be working. They will be dumping the waste and stock piling the coal for us to haul, and they will have 45 workers, operating 9 -150 ton haul trucks, 2 - 200 ton excavator backhoes, and 1 dozer and 1 grader working a 10 hour - 7 day/ 7 night/ 7 off, work cycle. They will be bussed in from Sparwood, have their own wash-up facilities, have their own OHS Committee, and will have little to no interaction with the Fording River workforce.

One Persons Opinion

We are all aware of the attack on Public health care in British Columbia, the government has cut vital services, closed residential care facilities and the list goes on. They have done nothing to shorten wait lists, or attract more health care practitioners. Recently all Elkford residents received a flyer in the mail regarding the cuts to our emergency and weekend services at the clinic.

In light of the two serious incidents at Fording River and Greenhills involving the coal dryers, the explosion at Greenhills and the slough of molten coal at the Fording River that seriously burned an employee, I feel we need adequate Health Care more than ever.

I believe we are flirting with disaster, and it will only be a matter of time when a worker is seriously injured, and needs a doctors care immediately, and we don't have one. I would like to see Teck take a more aggressive role in lobbying the government to retain and improve Health care in the Elk valley and;

**Become the Courageous Leaders that they
all want us to be**

Letter to the Editor - To Whom It May Concern:

I want to write this message to some very specific people. I am Cheyenne, one of the people who help keep up the house keeping and mechanical in the new washrooms at Brownie 4 and the Breaker. These washrooms are very nice to use, they have flushing toilets, sinks equipped with warm running water, and heat, for those not so warm days. I don't see what's not to like about them, but obviously there are some around us who don't. I know this because actions speak louder than words, and the willful damage is the proof of this. We all know the rules, we can't put the thick paper down the toilets, but some people are actually bundling up paper and stuffing it down the toilets and jamming up the little pump that helps this system work.

Now to the person or persons who seem to get a bang out of this deliberate act of vandalism, I know the only person who seems to matter here is you, and the whole world is to revolve around you and your wants and needs, but I have bad news for you, it doesn't work that way!!!. I want you to know because of you acts, we as a collection of people we call a union now are in a bad situation, if we ask for something in the future the company will say do you recall what happened when we tried to improve the pit washrooms. Then there are all the other people you have managed to inconvenience in your conquest. You are convinced you got the man, but you forgot about your co-workers and everyone else who can't use the washrooms until they are unclogged. Then there is the smell, that has gotten into the walls and floors, just think of the mosquito's this is going to attract, and let's not forget the bacteria and germs that are forever present. I can clean and sanitize all I want, but it's now in there for everyone to enjoy.

Congratulations, you have succeeded in managing to impress everyone, and still none of us understand why you have done this, or what you are trying to accomplish. If you think it's funny, it is not, and if you are trying to make a statement, it's not getting across. So for me and everyone else, thanks but no thanks, you can stop now!

Union Representation: When Do I Need IT?

Our Collective Agreement (CBA) allows for Union representation for certain circumstances. Firstly, Article 7.03 contemplates that a variety of disputes or complaints may arise from time to time. You should talk to your immediate supervisor and hopefully resolve the issue. If you cannot reach a resolve, a Shop Steward should be contacted as soon as possible so that they can provide advice and meet with a member of management to discuss the complaint or dispute.

When discipline is being contemplated by management, you have the right to Union representation; management must offer you the option of having a Shop Steward present. It has been our experience that all workers who face a possible disciplinary meeting should always exercise their right to representation. The Shop Steward is there to advocate on your behalf, they will have knowledge of similar incidents and the past practice.

They will make sure the issues are properly identified up front and have the opportunity to provide you guidance. Sometimes, the issues are clear and the Shop Steward will make sure that notes are taken to reflect the meetings discussions. In many cases, the Shop Steward will be able to provide argument and ask questions on matters that you did not think of.

The right to representation is one of the most important rights that you have so take full advantage of it, if you have any questions call us at the Union Hall. Stop by or send us an e-mail. 250-865-2223 or usw7884@telus.net.



Compassionate Care Leave

In 2006, the Provincial government has introduced amendments to the Employment Standards Act providing compassionate care leave for employees. This legislation serves as a complement to federal legislation providing employment insurance benefits for compassionate care leave. The proposed amendments provide for up to 8 weeks of unpaid leave to provide care or support to an ailing family member. The family member must be suffering from a serious medical condition posing a significant risk of death within 26 weeks of the earlier of the date of the certificate or the date the leave commenced.

In order to qualify for the leave, the employee must produce a certificate from a medical practitioner confirming the family member's medical condition and imminent risk of death. The certificate must be provided to the employer "as soon as practicable". For the purposes of the Employment Standards Act, a family member means a member of the employee's immediate family. This includes the employee's spouse, child, parent, guardian, sibling, grandchild or grandparent. It can also include any other person living with the employee as a member of the employee's family.

Compassionate care leave must be taken in units of at least one week in length. The entitlement to the 8 weeks of leave expires at the end of the 26 week period mentioned above. If the family member does not die during the 26 week period, however, the employee may take a further leave after obtaining a new certificate. Employees who are taking an unpaid compassionate care leave may apply for E.I. benefits during the leave, it provides for up to six weeks of wage replacement benefits for the employee who must take unpaid time off work to care for a family member with a serious medical condition. There is a two week waiting period for the benefits to commence.

There are certain procedural requirements which must be met in order to qualify to receive E.I. benefits during the leave. Similar to the BC legislation, a doctor must issue a certificate stating that the family member has a serious illness, there is a risk of death within 26 weeks, and the person requires a family member to provide care or support. Care or support is defined in the E.I. Act as providing psychological or emotional support, arranging for outside care, or directly providing or participating in the care. Compassionate leave benefits can be split among family members of the family, although each must apply individually. If you require further information on Compassionate Care Leave contact the Union Hall for assistance.

WHY YOU SHOULD REPORT ALL WORKPLACE INJURIES

To often workers run into problems with WCB when injuries/incidents and accidents are not reported. For example, a haul truck driver is getting loaded at a shovel and gets hit by the shovel bucket. The truck driver immediately feels a pull or strain in his back and neck and thinks nothing of it and continues on his haul in pain. The next day at work the pain and discomfort increases, and the worker reports the incident and pain to his foreman and first aid. The worker then leaves work and goes to the doctor and after testing it is determined that the worker sustained an impact injury that requires surgery.

The WCB Board denies the workers claim because he did not report the incident injury promptly, or in other words it may have happened somewhere outside of the workplace. Now the worker has to wait for surgery which could be several months. The worker receives no assistance from WCB, and the worker will have to appeal the WCB decision denying the claim, which will also take several months.

The employer as it has in many occasions will support the WCB decision denying the claim. The employer will argue either in writing or at an oral hearing that the claim should not be accepted because it was not reported in a timely way. The worker has surgery and misses months of work, again no WCB coverage. The worker ends up with lifetime problems. The worker loses their WCB appeal. The worker loses thousands of dollars and possibly their job.

***All of this Because of not Reporting to
First-aid and Reporting your Injury***

Family Responsibility Leave

This section of the Employment Standards Act was included in order to assist employees to meet work and family responsibilities. I will provide the following background information on this provision. Family responsibility leave is an employee initiated unpaid leave designated to help employees deal with family problems that conflict with job responsibilities.

This leave applies to members of the employee's immediate family or to persons living with the employee as a member of his or her immediate family.

***Immediate family** is defined to mean the spouse, child, parent, guardian, sibling, grandchild or grandparent of an employee, and any person who lives with an employee as a member of the employee's family.*

It includes common-law spouses, stepparents, stepchildren, and same sex partners and their children as long as they live with the employee as a member of the employee's family. It does not mean parent-in-law or any other relative by marriage, unless that person lives with the employee as part of the employee's family.

*Family Responsibility Leave is **an employee entitlement**, not something that may or may not be granted at the discretion of the employer. The employee is to be granted leave on request. The request does not need to be made because of a crisis or emergency but it must be related to the care or health, and in the case of a child education, of a member of the employee's immediate family.*

While notice is not required, the employee is encouraged to give reasonable notice so as to allow the employer time to accommodate the absence.

Employees should be prepared to provide the employer with sufficient information to demonstrate that the request for a leave is valid. If the employee is relying on Section 54(1) (attached), which states that an employer must grant the leave to which the employee is entitled, then the employee must establish entitlement by providing sufficient information about the nature of the leave to show it is for reasons set out in Section 52(a) and (b) attached, however not to the extent that employees are required to disclose personal or private information.

Section 54, Duties of Employer

54. (1) An employer must give an employee who requests leave under this part the leave to which the employee is entitled.

Section 52, Family Responsibility Leave

52. An employee is entitled to up to 5 days of unpaid leave during each employment year to meet responsibilities related to

(a) the care, health or education of a child in the employee's care, or

(b) the care or health of any other member of the employee's immediate family.

Remember, Family Responsibility Leave must fall within the scope of (a) or (b) above, and meet the definition of the leave for example; If I need to attend a parent teacher interview with my son, that would fall within the definition of the leave, if I need to attend my sons graduation ceremony, that would not fall within the scope of the leave as it is classified as a social event.

I need a family day to take my wife to a Doctors appointment in Cranbrook, this would fall within the scope of entitlement and the employee must be given the requested leave. If the company requests sufficient evidence that my wife had a Dr's appointment that day then I would need to provide a Dr's note, I do not need to divulge what the appointment was for, only sufficient evidence that I attended.

Do not let the company badger you with 20 questions, or threaten you when you request leave, for example these are some responses from management when workers requested leave; can't your wife drive herself – no she doesn't have a drivers license, cant she have a friend drive her – no can't find anyone, can't she take the bus - no her appointment is early in the morning. Another worker had to take a family day to take care of his new born baby, and here were the questions, get a doctors note – were not seeing the doctor, your probably going to have a meeting with Jason Smith in I.R., you could be put on the attendance review program. What the Company is doing in these instances is wrong, either the employee is entitled to the leave or not, a worker is not required to answer 20 questions, or be threatened by management if he takes the leave, if this continues the Union will take immediate action against the Company and it officials.

Any members having problems obtaining the above noted leave, or are being threatened or badgered with questions, are advised to call the Union Hall at 865-2223, or send us an e-mail usw7884@telus.net.

Break Times in Mine Operations

- *The 15 minute lunch break is to be taken between 9:00 – 11:00 A.M and P.M.*
- *The 20 minute lunch break is to be taken between 12:30 – 2:30 A.M and P.M.*
- *The 20 minute Ergo break is to be taken between 4:00 – 6:00 A.M and P.M.*

This time frame may be varied by mutual agreement only.

If your supervisor requests you to take your break outside the above noted periods and you do not want to, then he must schedule your break between the above noted periods. Remember it's taken between those hours and not after, for example: he cannot schedule you're ergo break to start at 6.00 A.M – P.M or start before 4.00 A.M – P.M. It must start after 4 am –pm and be completed before 6 am – pm.

**Visit Your Local Union Website @
USW7884.com**

Membership Meetings
Every third Wednesday of the month at 5pm
#12 Water Street Elkford BC

Attendance Review Program – A.R.P

The company started to roll out it's "new" attendance review program and is proceeding with meetings with workers who the company feels have attendance problems.

Actually, the attendance review program is not new at all. In the 1980's the company introduced an A.R.P program which the Union challenged. The arbitrator found that it was acceptable to have a program for attendance for "Non Culpable" absenteeism, non culpable means that it is of no fault of the employee (IE sickness, injury, other types of leave).

In today's world many company's have these programs. It is also clear that most Union challenges against Attendance Review Programs are concentrated not on the policy itself but on how the company applies the policy in individual circumstances.

For example, if a worker was put on the ARP and their attendance does not improve, the company will have to make a decision on whether to discharge the worker or not. The company will be under careful scrutiny by an arbitrator on the following.

- 1. Is the absenteeism excessive*
- 2. Is there any prognosis for improvement in the future*
- 3. Has the employer met its obligation or duty to accommodate (Human Rights Act of British Columbia)?*

The above is not a complete list of what the company's obligations are. Another example is that the Union has successfully negotiated benefits for workers who are absent from work for "non culpable reasons" (ie sickness accident benefits, long term disability benefits, holiday pay accrual for a period of absence up to 1 year, continuing seniority rights, continuing health benefit rights). Certainly, the company cannot discharge a worker for accessing negotiated benefits.

Only time will tell on what the company intends to do in each particular case. It is at that time, all legal challenges will be made by the Union and its members.

If you are put on the Attendance review program, please call the Union hall for a more in depth conversation, as all cases will be different.

USW Forcing Historic Prosecution in Worker's Death

*Our union has launched a private prosecution against Weyerhaeuser Company Ltd., alleging it was criminally negligent in the November 2004 death of Steelworker Lyle Hewer. A hearing on October 26 will determine if a trial will proceed against Weyerhaeuser under the so-called Westray amendments to the **Criminal Code**.*

A 55-year-old sawmill worker and member of USW Local 1-3567, Brother Hewer died from injuries suffered while he was clearing out a hog under Weyerhaeuser's direction.

"It is our view that this case must go to trial... and that the evidence will show that the company is criminally responsible for Lyle Hewer's death," says USW District 3 Director Stephen Hunt.

"Weyerhaeuser must be held accountable if convicted."

The USW launched this prosecution following the shocking decision by B.C. Crown prosecutors not to charge Weyerhaeuser for Brother Hewer's death, contrary to recommendations of investigators.

An investigation by New Westminster police concluded Weyerhaeuser should be charged with criminal negligence causing death. WorkSafe BC – the provincial workers' compensation agency – fined Weyerhaeuser a record \$297,000, saying the company ignored safety concerns and condoned a culture where "complacency in the face of danger became the norm."

*Fighting for safe workplaces and holding employers accountable are sacred trusts for Steelworkers. It was the USW that led the decade-long campaign that produced the **Criminal Code** Westray amendments in 2004. We launched our campaign after 26 coal miners were killed in the 1992 Westray Mine disaster in Nova Scotia.*

Still, since the Westray amendments were enacted, about 6,000 workers have been killed on the job in Canada. Only a single conviction has been registered against an employer, in a plea bargain that saw no jail time for the negligent employer.

Clearly, Crown prosecutors across the country are not holding employers accountable for workplace deaths. The USW's private prosecution of Weyerhaeuser demonstrates our commitment to reverse this unacceptable trend and to eliminate all tolerance in our society for workplace deaths and injuries.

The recent death of one of our USW brothers in Saskatchewan reinforces our commitment.

Edward Artic, 59, a member of USW Local 7552 and an electrician at Agrium Inc.'s Vanscoy operation, died on May 11. Brother Artic was working in the Vanscoy mill when he was struck in the head by a piece of rigging device, initial reports indicate. Investigations are ongoing.

We extend our condolences to Brother Artic's family, co-workers and community. And we will continue to fight to stop the killing.

Just do it, Mr. Premier: Kill the HST

Just days ago, Premier Gordon Campbell's No. 1 adviser, Martyn Brown, admitted he didn't know Energy Minister Blair Lekstrom had resigned in protest over the harmonized sales tax. If this means Campbell is forced to look further afield for advice on scrapping the HST, perhaps Nike offers him some direction: Just do it.

The Liberal government doesn't need a referendum, and British Columbians don't need to drop another \$20 million to find out what we think about the HST. The government should call the legislature back this fall and do what British Columbians want for a change: Kill the HST.

Then they should sit down with the rest of us and begin developing a fair taxation policy to ensure all our citizens receive the support that makes us proud of our province. Let's be clear, the labour movement is not against taxes. We understand that taxes fund important public services and programs.

But the labour movement, like most British Columbians, is against taxes that are dishonest. Introduced days after the Liberals were re-elected, even though they ruled it out during the election campaign, the HST is a thoroughly dishonest tax. Its introduction showed a contempt for voters and a disdain for democracy. This is not how taxation policy should be developed.

Furthermore, the labour movement simply cannot accept a tax that takes \$2 billion from the pockets of British Columbians, many of whom are having trouble making ends meet, and gives it to corporations, many of which are already profitable. This is the wrong tax at the wrong time for the wrong reasons.

How much more will we pay to finance the Liberals' tax shift? That's a subject of debate. The TD Bank estimated the annual cost increase of the HST on a typical BC family would be \$800. In Ontario, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives analysis suggests the introduction of the HST in that province will have minimal impact on taxpayers. But that is with tax credits, tax cuts and exemptions that are not part of the plan here in B.C.

The Fraser Institute, in a bid to rescue its Liberal friends, released a thin report suggesting there would be no cost increases for British Columbians because of the HST. A more thorough analysis was also released this week that used a Statistics Canada model. It found B.C. households, particularly seniors, would be hit hard by the HST.

Finance Minister Colin Hansen has seemed entirely in the dark on how the HST will affect individuals and families. This is not how tax policy should be developed.

But he's not confused about the so-called benefits. If we all pay lots more and corporations get big tax cuts, British Columbians will get more jobs, lower prices, increased wages and more corporate investment. The B.C. Liberals have fed us this line before. They slashed income taxes by about \$2 billion a year, disproportionately to the wealthy, and told us it would make us a stronger province.

The Liberals have already slashed corporate taxes by about \$1.5 billion a year. They told us this would boost competitiveness, productivity and job growth. Having cut \$3.5 billion in annual provincial revenues, who feels any richer?

No matter how you measure it, the Liberals' tax slashing has failed to deliver the promised results. Employment growth has been lower than in the 1990s. Investment in machinery and equipment in B.C. has barely increased. Even before the recession began in 2008, the forest industry had lost almost 24,000 good jobs. Child poverty is highest in Canada. Tax cuts haven't worked. Instead they have left a legacy of chronic cuts, closed schools, underfunded health care facilities, angry seniors, children without proper support, declining wages and growing unemployment.

The Liberals never tire of telling us people don't like paying tax. That's only half true. People understand value for money, and most don't mind paying fair taxes to build a strong province. What people really don't like is being lied to and taken for fools.



Show Your Union Card

1. Sparwood Husky (Sparwood ONLY)
 - 1.5 cents off fuel
 - 5% off in store (not on Tobacco or Lottery)
2. Sparwood Hose & Fitting – 5% off
3. Intermountain Services
 - \$100 off purchase of a seacan
 - 10% off rental
4. NAPA - 10% (applies to all mine employees)
5. Cummins Western Canada - 5% off
6. BOARDSTIFF - in Fernie, BC - 10% off
7. The Cottonwood Tree Health Food store in Fernie, BC - 10% off
8. Ski Base - in Fernie, BC - 10% off
9. Fernie Sports - Fernie, BC - 10% off
10. Elk River Guiding Company - Fernie, BC - 15% off
11. W.E. Insurance (Home and Auto)
 - Call 1-800-663-4200 in BC
 - Call 1-877-787-7021 in all other Provinces.
12. W.E Tax Services - Call 1-800-845-1181

Show your Steelworkers Union card at any of the above noted businesses and get the respective discount. If you have or know of any Local businesses who wish to participate in this program please have them contact Don at the Union Hall at 250-865-2223.

Employees' Right to Refuse Work

- Unsafe Work 1.10.1** A person shall not carry out any work or operate any equipment, tool, or appliance if he has reasonable cause to believe that to do so would create an undue hazard to the health or safety of any person.
- 1.10.2** A Supervisor shall not knowingly perform or permit a worker to perform work which is, or could create, an undue hazard to the health or safety of any person.
- Right to Refuse 1.10.3** A person who refuses to carry out any work or operate any equipment, tool, or appliance, in compliance with section 1.10.1, shall forthwith report the circumstances to his supervisor.
- Supervisor 1.10.4 Investigates** The Supervisor receiving a report under section 1.10.3 shall forthwith investigate the matter and ensure that any hazardous condition is remedied without delay; or if, in his opinion the report is not valid, he shall inform the person who made the report.
- Investigation 1.10.5** If the procedure provided for in section 1.10.4 fails to resolve the issue and the person continues to refuse to carry out the work, the supervisor or other management representative shall forthwith make an investigation in the presence of the person who made the report, together with another person having knowledge of the work in question and who is:
- (1) a worker representative or designate of the OHSC if available or
 - (2) designated by the Local Union to represent the person refusing to carry out the work, or
 - (3) a co-worker selected by the person refusing to carry out the work.

**Use of 1.10.6
Alternate
Worker**

If the person still refuses to carry out the work after his supervisor and the other person have investigated the issue in accordance with section 1.10.5 and are both of the opinion that no undue hazard exists and that

- (1) the refusal is considered to be justifiable for reasons peculiar to that particular person, and
- (2) there is no justification for an alternate person to refuse to carry out the work in question then, the supervisor, after informing the alternate person of the reason for the refusal, may have him perform the work.

**Manager 1.10.7
Investigates**

If the procedure in sections 1.10.4, 1.10.5 and 1.10.6 fail to resolve the issue, the manager shall

- (1) conduct an investigation and either develop a plan that is acceptable to the persons who will do the work and which will allow the work to proceed safely, or suspend further work, and
- (2) if the work is suspended or allowed to proceed, submit a report to the OHSC, local Union, and an Inspector, that describes the incident, shows compliance with the code and describes any remedial action taken.

This is a legislated requirement under the Health Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia. Don't be intimidated by anyone, into doing something that you believe is unsafe.

REQUEST A UNION SAFETY REP!



“While you’re up there, would you mind sticking your finger in the socket to see if there’s any current?”

U.S.W., LOCAL 7884 WORKER MEMBERS OF THE J.S.H.C./O.H.S.C.

Worker Co-Chairperson:

Graham Pointer: G Process 425-7420 grpointer1@hotmail.com

Designate:

Don Takala 5&2 Union Hall 865-2223 (423-1024) dontakala@hotmail.com

Committee Members:

Andrew Klapp F Mine Op 865-2234 aklapp123@hotmail.com

Carman Draper I Mine Op 865-2379 dogpatch1@hotmail.com

Otto Kliment: I Maint. 865-4541 different123@hotmail.com

If anyone has any questions concerns or Safety complaints that are not being addressed at the Mine-site, please contact one of the Workers Rep's on the above list, by sending a message to their hotmail address. If you don't feel comfortable leaving your name that's fine, but please explain the safety concern in detail so that the Committee can address the issue with as much information as possible. You can also forward your safety concern to the Union Hall at usw7884@telus.net and we will immediately forward the concern to the OHSC Committee.

FORDING RIVER WORKING CHRISTMAS

What's up with Fording River forcing their employees to work Christmas? How much money is enough money? Where is that fine line drawn between profit, and showing respect and gratitude for all the hard work the employees have displayed throughout the year? If Shutting down for a couple days at Christmas is going to break this Company; were in big trouble.

Mommy Where is Daddy?



The following message was issued to the workers at Elkview from their Management Staff

- *“We do anticipate taking a Christmas Vacation Shutdown for Mine Operations and Mine Maintenance/Warehouse. On December 24th we will be operating the mine dayshift and nightshift; however the Company is prepared to allow employees the option of working or not working the nightshift of the 24th”.*

“Employees who choose to take the 24th nightshift off will need to cover their time off according to the Collective Agreement. The Company will also be recognizing the statutory holidays on December 25th and 26th for mine operations/mine maintenance and warehouse employees, but will require coverage to maintain plant feed”.

“From December 27th to January 2nd inclusive the Company will initiate a vacation shutdown for all mine operations, mine maintenance, warehouse employees. All of the employees not required to work will be required to cover off their time with vacation in accordance with the Collective Agreement”. (WHY ARE WE BEING FORCED TO WORK)?

Vehicle Ramps or Stands

It appears that some things never change. Just recently a truck wash ramp was installed in the pit. Supervisors and employees deemed that this ramp was unsafe. Management and safety reps. discussed the issues and agreed that something else had to be done. Management was made aware of the legalities that needed to be followed before such a ramp could be installed. Somewhere along the way an individual made the decision what was safe and what was not safe regardless of the legalities. This individual decided that if a couple of legs were added it would be good enough to use. Once again supervisors, employees and safety reps. had to go and check the job and deemed it unsafe. To ensure that this ramp was not used it was agreed that it would be removed completely from the site. It is sad that although several people (including management) said this is unsafe another person took it upon him/herself to continue with the project with total disregard to safety not to mention the mines act.

The mines act states

“---- a ramp or other type of vehicle support shall meet the requirements of the applicable section of ANSI Standard ASME PALD-1993,-----”

And the mines act states in section 3

“The rated load capacity shall be marked on each automotive lift, hoist, axle stand, ramp or other vehicle support and must not be exceeded.”

The mine act also states

“If a device listed in subsection (3) is modified or if the manufacturer’s rated load is not known, the rated load capacity shall be established by a professional engineer.”

NO, you cannot grab something made out of steel and use it to park a truck on it. During the discussions between safety reps. and management the company was made aware of the articles in the mines act. I find it very discerning that someone would authorize the continuing of the job in contradiction of the mines act and the discussions. It’s obvious that certain individuals seem to think that they can do whatever they want regardless of their knowledge of the job. I would encourage the employees to call your safety reps. when you are asked to do a job you don’t consider safe. Always remember if it looks like a duck, quacks like a duck, flies like a duck, and swims like a duck it certainly isn’t a dog.

Courageous Leaders

We are all aware of the new direction Teck Coal is going as far as Health & Safety. Safety is supposed to be number one, ahead of production, costs and profitability. Don Lindsey told us that our people are our most valuable asset. Generally I believe most of management agrees in principal with this concept, but after 2 years there is still some management staff out there that has a difficult time grasping this concept.

*One incident that stands out is when a foreman and acting senior foremen pulled up to a haul truck that would not start after a steering test. They proceeded to show a new employee (green hat) how to jump start the truck with a metal object, and to put the icing on the cake, there were **NO** wheel chocks down.*

Were these management people being Courageous Leaders, were they being good examples to the new employee and the rest of the work force, I think not. I believe their only interest was getting the tuck started at whatever cost, maybe their philosophy is and always has been, “production over safety”. This all occurred one week after the accident at Greenhills where, the workers jumped a starter on a haul truck and the truck ended up at the bottom of the spoil.

*How can Don Lindsey expect us to be Courageous Leaders, and build a Solid Safety culture at Fording River, when
“We question our Safety Leadership”???*

- ***“Foreman is a title you are given. “Leader is a reputation you earn from your crew.***
- ***You are a Role Model. Do you practice and demonstrate Safety or do you only talk Safety?***
- ***Others do what they see you do not what you say!!!***

Retirement Security for Everyone

I would like to bring to your attention the campaign launched by the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) with respect to pension reform in Canada.

The Federal Government is currently looking at reforming our pension laws in Canada and the Finance Ministers of both Provincial and Federal governments have been meeting to discuss this very important issue.

The campaign by the Canadian Labour Congress consists of three (3) components

- 1 – Labour’s plan to grow the Canada Pension Plan (CPP)
- 2 – Raising the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) by 15%
- 3 – Pension Insurance

1 – Canada Pension Plan

Offering every Canadian the chance to save enough money to provide for in their retirement is what’s behind Labour’s plan to change our country’s pension plan.

We believe that the best way to help today’s workers save enough money is by increasing what everybody gets from the Canada Pension Plan (CPP). The proposal would lay the foundation to double CPP benefits for the future.

The CPP operates independently from government and there is no cost to taxpayers. As well, a higher and secure pension would mean that our seniors would be less likely to rely on income supports like the Guaranteed Income Supplement, or provincial and local social supports.

The cost to workers and employers is small. Over seven (7) years, the CPP premiums would slowly rise of 0.4% each year of pensionable earning (which are capped at \$47,200 today).

If you are age.....	Your CPP pension for these years without labour’s plan	Your CPP pension for these years with labour’s plan
28 (and make 37 years of contributions until age 65)	\$10,635.28 per year \$886.27 per month	\$21,270.65 per year \$1,772.54 per month
38 (and make 27 years	\$7,760.88 per year	\$15,521 per year

of contributions until age 65)	\$646.74 per month	\$1,293.48 per month
48 (and make 17 years of contributions until age 65)	\$4,141.03 per year \$345.09 per month	\$8,282.05 per year \$690.17 per month
58 (and make 7 years of contributions until age 65)	\$2,012.08 per year \$175.17 per month	\$4,024.16 per year \$335.34 per month

Not everyone would see their overall CPP income double by the time they reach 65; the benefits are clear after only several years of the extra contribution. **2 – Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS)**

More than a third of today’s seniors with public pensions (OAS and CPP) have incomes under \$15,000 per year. Today we can provide a one time 15% increase to the Guaranteed Income Supplement (GIS) – the top-up to Old Age Security (OAS) for our poorest seniors.

The cost is minimal (\$1.1 billion) and would shrink over time due to higher retirement incomes through our plan to boost the CPP.

This is a reasonable investment to ensure that all of our seniors have some dignity in their retirement.

3 – Pension Insurance

Recent events have proven the need for pension insurance. The plan would see the federal government create a new insurance system that would protect pension benefits up to a maximum of \$2,500 per month, with premiums as low as \$2.50/year for each plan member.

The plan would also see the federal government create an agency to adopt private pension plans abandoned in corporate bankruptcy so the workers are guaranteed that the money they have paid into those plans does not get lost.

Pension plans are very important in Canada’s retirement income system. And by requiring pension plans to carry insurance is a fair trade-off to ensure workers’ pension assets are protected against future market disasters.

What can you do?

- 1 – Call your Member of Parliament – Tell them to support the CLC’s position on phasing in the doubling of the CPP.
- 2 – Call your Provincial Representative – Tell the to support the CLC’s position
- 3 – Talk to co-workers in the workplace and ask them to call their MP’s and provincial representatives
- 4 – Visit the web page at canadianlabour.ca to get further information and assist us in implementing labour’s plan.

The next meeting of the finance ministers is planned for late May, and is leading up to a full fledged provincial-federal meeting on pension reform with the prime minister and premiers in August.

Grievance Report

Lately there has been an increase of discipline handed out to our members. The infractions vary from AWOL’s, carelessness, undue care and attention, extended breaks, leaving early and dishonesty. For the most part the infractions are minor.

Please make sure you have representation if you are disciplined. Also remember that the company representatives are documenting everything you say and this also means calls to your home. Be very careful what you say or better still; contact a union representative for guidance.

We hope this latest trend is not a return to the past. / guess only time will tell.

If I provide information to the Company will I remain anonymous?

It depends how the Company uses the information. If for example the company sanctions an employee based on the information you provided, the company may be obligated at some point in the investigation to provide the source of the information provided. Especially if there is a dispute in the accuracy. You may also be called as a witness in arbitration. For a more in depth discussion, please contact me at the Union hall.