

Presidents Report To The General Membership

September 17, 2019



Hello from beautiful Brandon Manitoba where it's a balmy 30 degrees today. I do want to thank all of you for being on the line with us today despite the fact that summer has come back to Manitoba.

I'm on the line almost literally from the bargaining table where we're working on renewing the contract for our 1900 members working at the Maple Leaf plant just down the road from our office, and I will give a detailed report on bargaining in a minute or two but first I need to talk about the results of the healthcare votes that were announced August 22nd.

Healthcare Votes

- HSBURA brief description
- Governments goal was to disrupt unions – worked
- Dragged on for nearly two years then they called the votes for this summer at the same time they called an early election
- All unions including UFCW spent the summer campaigning across the province
- We were in a total of seven votes, but we were not the largest union in any of them – in some we only had a small percentage of the members voting
- We were not successful in any of the votes despite our strong effort
- In all we will be losing about 2,400 members out of the nearly 20,000 we represent so a little over 10% of our membership and we no longer represent any members in the healthcare sector
- The transition will likely be complete in early October
- We are cooperating with the successful unions to make sure that our members are treated well and that their current issues will be looked after once the transition is complete
- There are many people that worked very hard and this was not the result that they deserved
- We will be losing Nellie Minville, Marissa Pasquerelli and Patricia Bolduc from our Executive Board and their last meeting will be September 27 – All three of them worked very hard on the campaign and I want to thank them for that and thank them for their years of service to all of our members during their time on the EBRD
- Our shop stewards at the SBGH, The Grace and across the north in the NRHA also deserve a huge thank you – they volunteered their time on the campaign and did everything they could do in their workplaces to promote UFCW as the union for healthcare workers
- Our union reps pulled double duty throughout the campaign and continued to provide great service to our members while traveling to all the many locations throughout Winnipeg and the north during the campaign period and they too deserve a huge thank you for their efforts

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- And last but certainly not least, I want to say a huge and heartfelt thank you to Marie Buchan who worked tirelessly with our reps, stewards and executive board members for the last two years and who represented UFCW proudly at countless meeting with the WRHA, the special commissioner and our members before and during the campaign and who continues to work as hard as she is well known to do to make sure our members are looked after as they transition to their new union
- And to our healthcare members across the province I want to tell you that it has been an honour for us to have had the opportunity to represent you in your workplaces and while we will not represent you in the future we will continue to fight for the rights of healthcare workers and all workers in Manitoba and will stand beside you and your new union in the fight for fair wages and better working conditions in the future

Provincial Election

- Our election was on September 10th and Brain Pallister's Conservatives have won another majority although somewhat smaller than the last
- This is bad news for healthcare and public sector workers as he has tabled legislation that limits financial improvements at negotiations to 1.75% over 4 years
- But it's also bad news for private sector workers as legislation affects all workers whether public or private – unionized or not. Pallister is going after retail workers next as he's promised to repeal the Retail Business Holiday Closing Act which will completely open up shopping on Sundays and statutory holidays with no restrictions.
- This means businesses can open all day Sunday and even on Christmas Day. Retail workers who have a spouse that works Monday to Friday or children in school will now have no opportunity to spend quality time with their family when they're off on weekends or holidays.
- This government is now reviewing education – something that Pallister has said is very expensive so we can expect that he'll look to save money on the backs of our future – and that's our children's education.
- People ask me why we're so politically involved – I even had one member complain that we encouraged people not to vote for Pallister.
- But legislation affects workers and it affects our members so as long as we are sworn to protect the rights of working people we will continue to support the party that takes working people's issues seriously and doesn't just give them lip service.
- Today that party is the NDP but if there was another party that cared as much or more about worker's rights, we would support them as well.
- Unions don't leave politics alone because politicians don't leave workers alone – simple as that.

Maple Leaf Brandon Bargaining

- Started with 2 days in June but broke for the summer so we really just got started September 3rd

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- The plant has about 1900 UFCW members working there and it's a very diverse group made up of people from all over the world
- The contract was last negotiated in 2014 and there are about 70 proposals on the Table combined
- We have a committee of 20 that has been doing a fantastic job of representing our members and working hard to bring the concerns forward to the company
- We've had 10 days at the table altogether and while there are quite a few items agreed they are relatively minor in nature and we seem to be slowing down as we are now talking about the big ticket items
- We have yet to discuss any monetary proposals – those are usually left for the end of the process so we won't likely get to those until October
- We are concerned that we only have 5 days scheduled after October 4th, but the contract doesn't expire until December 31st so there's lots of time to get the deal done. Our next GMM is in early November so I will give an update at that meeting.

Stella's First Contract

- Organized 2 Stella's locations late last year and started bargaining with them in early March
- Negotiations were very difficult and so in June we applied for conciliation, but after several meetings it became clear that the 2 parties were so far apart we weren't going to be able to get a deal done.
- Late June we applied to have the Manitoba Labour Board impose the first agreement at the Sherbrook location
- The hearing at the board was September 4th and the board has until September 27th to impose the first contract.
- The term of that contract will be one year from the date of the award so it won't be long before we're back at the table again and we still have the Osborne location to finish negotiating as well.

Light the Night Walk

- Winnipeg September 28 at pm at the forks
- Brandon October 5 at 5 pm at the riverbank discovery centre

Jeff Traeger

President
UFCW Local 832