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Renaud Gagné was elected Quebec Director at this month's Quebec Council.

Gagné elected Quebec Director

Renaud Gagné was elected the new Quebec Director at the recent Quebec Council in Montreal.

"We need to turn the page and work together for the future of Unifor," Gagné told Quebec Council

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Budget bill latest Harper attack on workers

Unifor has condemned Bill C-59's blatant attacks on collective bargaining rights of workers in the federal public service.

The Budget Implementation Act,

tabled earlier this month, authorizes the Treasury Board to modify collective agreements to remove sick leave and impose a short and long term disability plan outside of collective agreements.

The Bill will violate the Public Service Labour Relations Act.

"With the strike of a pen the Harper Conservative government is trashing the collective bargaining rights of public service workers," said Unifor National President Jerry Dias.

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Coast Guard base closures draw protest

Coast Guard officers and a diverse group of Vancouver organizations marked the Harper government's May 6 closure of the city's Coast Guard station with a rally that afternoon outside the shuttered Kitsilano base.

"Stephen Harper

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#unifor

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion

@bajabreeze2355

This is worth protecting fishing/tourism jobs/lives. Stop Coast Guard cuts @UniforTheUnion @UniforLocal2182 #Ucluelet pic.twitter.com/3kO1g8eoHR


@uniglobalunion

Deb Tveit of @UniforTheUnion "Care is a fundamental sector as it allows people to maintain a good quality of life." pic.twitter.com/NFuvHHkKkU

In brief

Local 1291, Ariva

Members of Unifor Local 1291, working at for Ariva, a division of Domtar, have ratified a new collective agreement.

The agreement includes annual 2 per cent wage increases, a \$1,000 signing bonus, increased shift premiums and life insurance. It also establishes a new 3 cent per hour employer paid education leave program. The new agreement is retro-active to April 16, 2014 and expires on April 16, 2018. It achieves all key elements of Unifor's Eastern Canada Pulp and Paper Pattern. 

Local 324, Kenora Forest

Unifor Local 324 ratified a six-year labour agreement with Kenora Forest Products that sees increases to both wages and pension contributions.

Along with a 67 per cent increase in employer contributions to employee pensions, the new deal will see production pay rise by 18 per cent and licensed trades pay increase by 36 per cent to almost \$36 an hour by the final year of the contract.


The local was able to hold a ratification vote now that an expansion project has started and Unifor members are being recalled. 

Photo spotlight

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Unifor activists in Metro Vancouver celebrate Vaisakhi.

PHOTO BY LOCAL 111



Vancouver-area locals came out to support the Coast Guard, including Simon Lau from Local 2002.

PHOTO BY TODD DUNCAN

Workers of Diversity conference soon

Unifor's Workers of Diversity Conference is just around the corner. There is still time to register for the June 5-7 conference at the Family Education Centre in Port Elgin.


It will be an exciting weekend of guest speakers and skills workshops, and a chance to meet with other Unifor members from across the union who are challenging racism, building

better communities and strengthening our union.

Because this is an election year, the theme of the conference this year is, "Building a union for everyone - Building a country for everyone."

"The Harper government has hurt our communities, and so it is important that we work together to bring a new government to this country," said Mohamad

Alsadi Human Rights and International Department Director.

Speakers will include Cindy Blackstock, Executive Director of First Nations and Caring Society of Canada, Bernice Celeita, President and founder of the Association for Social Research and Action in Columbia and Unifor National President Jerry Dias. 

GardaWorld locks out workers

GardaWorld locked out Unifor Local 4266 members in Ottawa, after contract negotiations fell apart. GardaWorld issued its lock-out notice on May 15.

"We are determined to reach an equitable agreement which improves safety and job security for our members - Garda is instead attempting to force concessions which would

turn good jobs into much worse ones," said Unifor Local 4266 President Andre Desjardins.

"Jobs in the armored car industry can be very dangerous - it's vital that we do not allow conditions to deteriorate."

Unifor represent 140 GardaWorld workers in Ottawa who make deliveries to banks such

as TD, RBC, BNS, BMO and National Bank as well as other institutions.

Negotiations began in October 2014 and the current contract expired on October 31.

GardaWorld, one of the largest private security and cash logistics firms in the world, generated more than \$1.8 billion in revenues last year. 


UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS: KATIE ARNUP, SARAH BLACKSTOCK, IAN BOYKO, SHELLEY BURGOWNE, SHANNON DEVINE, STUART LAIDLAW, SARAH LESNIEWSKI, MARIE-ANDRÉE L'HEUREUX, AND ANNE MARIE VINCENT

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Harper..."** on page 1

"This is a government that not only has zero respect for workers, but apparently zero respect for the Charter of Rights and Freedoms," Dias said. He noted that the Supreme Court has established the right to collective bargaining as a Charter right.

Unifor members affected will include workers in the Coast Guard, Air Traffic Controllers and printers.

"Unifor will not stand by and allow our members' rights to be squashed by the Harper Conservatives," Dias said.

The union has indicated it will be working with other unions with members in the public service to protect their collective bargaining rights. 

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closures..."** on page 1

doesn't understand British Columbia," said Jerry Dias, National President of Unifor. "Harper is aggressively pushing for more oil tanker traffic and closing coast guard stations at the same time."

It's the fourth Marine Communications and Traffic Services Centre (MCTS) to close.

Coast guard officers represented by Unifor Local 2182 say that the ongoing closures of MCTS centres across Canada threatens their ability to prevent shipping accidents and the capacity to provide a rapid response.

The federal government has already closed the MCTS centres in Ucluelet, Saint John, and St. John's




Unifor Local 2182 President Chad Stoud said the Coast Guard are vital.

and has plans to close the bases in Thunder Bay, Rivière au Renard, St. Anthony, and Comox.

"When a serious pollution incident happens, quick notification and response is key to limiting the spread of pollutants," said Chad

Stroud, Unifor Local 2182 President.

"The Harper government is dismantling the west coast's prevention and emergency response system that has been in place for decades." 

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delegates.

Active in the labour movement for more than 30 years, Gagné has his roots in the paper industry, which has given him the opportunity to work in all regions of Quebec.

Gagné was elected Vice-President of CEP Quebec in 2007, and became Assistant to the Quebec Director upon the founding of Unifor. He pledged to work on behalf of all of Unifor's local unions and members, while stressing the need to rally the troops.

The May 6-8 meeting also featured addresses from National President Jerry Dias, Secretary-Treasurer Peter Kennedy

and Assistant to the President Bob Orr.

Also elected were Alain Sévigny of Local 8284 as a Member at Large of the Quebec Council Executive, Diane Labrecque and Marc-André Paré to the Health and Safety and Environment Committee, Hugues Perreault to the Political Action Committee and Joachim Alexo of Local 62 and Christophe Gastaldi of Local 522 as members of the LGBT Committee.

Delegates debated about a dozen resolutions, discussed social media and the law and participated in workshops based on a discussion paper prepared by the working group on local unions.

Michel Ouimet, Unifor's first Quebec Director, gave his last report to the




Founding Quebec Director Michel Ouimet has now retired.

Quebec Council before retiring. He was sent off with several minutes of applause by the delegates.

Ouimet spent 40 years in the Quebec labour movement. After starting his career as a technician at Bell Canada, he played a part in founding the union representing Bell technicians, before going on to take an active role in the

predecessor unions to CEP.

Over all these years, Ouimet handled many important files, including pay equity for Bell Canada operators, which led to one of the largest pay equity settlements in Canada.

He also negotiated the merger of the 12,000-member Canadian Telephone Employees' Association with CEP. 

Fund local and ethnic TV programming

Unifor is calling on the federal Cabinet to direct the CRTC to develop a new funding formula for local television programming, including ethnic programming, saying job cuts at Rogers this month show why such action is needed.

“If the Cabinet can exercise its prerogative to direct the CRTC to implement pick and pay, it can direct the regulator to

come up with a fair funding formula to keep much-needed local programming on the air,” Unifor National President Jerry Dias said.


Dias said the May 7 job cuts, coming on the eve of a federal election, are a direct consequence of decisions by the CRTC that have failed to reflect the importance of local programming, news reporting and programming that reflects Canada’s diverse communities.

“Canadian democracy is served best by an informed public. News gathering is being cut just as Canadian voters need it the most.”

Rogers announced is laying off approximately 100 people, cutting into local programming and news gathering, as well as dropping the nationally broadcast OMNI News in Italian, Mandarin and Cantonese, and cancelling “V-Mix” and “Bollywood

Boulevard”, two English language programs for South Asian audiences across Canada.

Unifor Media Council Chair Randy Kitt said the cuts come after years of job losses at Rogers – more than 200 in two years – while the CRTC allowed funding to be syphoned away from local and ethnic programming.

“These cuts mean fewer people telling our diverse communities’ stories.”

Auto parts workers build solidarity

In meetings across Ontario this month, Unifor auto parts locals are working together, building solidarity and discussing bargaining strategies in hopes of improving their collective agreements in the next rounds of negotiations.

“The people in this room have the answers,” Unifor Ontario Region Director Katha Fortier told the May 5 meeting in Kitchener.

The meetings – also in London, Windsor, Oshawa

and Brampton – are seeking shop-floor ideas on how to build solidarity and stronger collective agreements within the sector, which represents about 17,000 workers.

Unifor Assistant to the President Shane Wark said that while the sector is doing much better than after the financial crisis, it still faces many challenges. The meetings, he said, are being held to generate discussions on getting the




Parts workers are meeting across southern Ontario.

best deal in the next round of talks.

“With the challenges we face today, we need to think about doing things differently.”

At the meetings, each

table of activists is given an issue to discuss, such as young workers, contract length, standardized wages, grow-ins and more, and asked to come up with solutions for addressing them.

Unifor helping Bombardier members

Unifor will meet with its members at Bombardier and company executives to discuss the impact of recently announced layoffs, and to safeguard the interests of its members.

“Unifor is here for the membership, and we will do all we can for them through this process,” said Scott McIlmoyle, President of Unifor Local 112, which represents production workers at Bombardier’s

Downsview plant.

McIlmoyle said the first order of business will be to sort out the exact impact and timing of the layoffs on Unifor members. Besides the members of Local 112, Unifor also represents office and clerical staff at the Downsview plant, members of Unifor Local 673, and Local 62 in Montreal.

Unifor Aerospace Director Dawn Cartwright said the planned

introduction of a new aircraft to the Downsview production line shows the company sees a strong future for the plant, and that this layoff is a reflection of current conditions in the business jet market.

“The business jet industry has its ups and downs, that’s why we negotiate things like recall rights and notice periods, to help smooth out the process,” Cartwright said. “A new

aircraft is coming to our plant. We are confident in the longer term.”

Cartwright said Unifor representatives will meet with the company. After notice, layoffs are not expected until September at the earliest.

“We will be meeting with the company to get those details, but it may take a week or two to confirm the exact impact on our members,” she said.