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uniforum



LGBT activists, staff and allies proudly display their colours during the Toronto Pride Parade held June 28. Go to unifor.org/pride to find more events.

Atlantic Regional Council inspires delegates

Close to 200 people gathered in Saint John, New Brunswick at Unifor's Atlantic Regional Council from June 18-21.

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Air Canada deal ratified

Members of Unifor Local 2002, representing more than 4,000 Customer Service and Sales Representatives, have ratified a new five-year collective agreement with Air Canada.

"Our members deserve to share in Air Canada's record profits," said Jerry Dias, Unifor National President. "This agreement

secures good jobs for Customer Sales and Service Agents now and into the future."

A pivotal arbitration victory in May 2015 paved the way towards recovering wheelchair assistance work seized earlier this year by airport authorities. New language related to the agreement also provides protections against future contracting out.

The agreement features a significant hourly wage increase for those at the lower end of the salary grid.

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Local union town halls begin

The cross-country discussion on strengthening local unions in Unifor has begun with the first Local Union Task Force (LUTF) town hall Regina.

The June 22 meeting attracted Unifor local executives, shop stewards and members from Regina and communities such as

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#unifor

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion

@jbg44

@UniforTheUnion Unifor THANK YOU for fighting for us to get full-time! That's how you win me over to wanting to be union member.

@FredHahnCUPE

Amazing #Solidarity from @UniforTheUnion for @CUPE101 -- thanks from all members of @CUPEOntario #StandingTogether

Organizing Forum

The very first Unifor Organizing Forum will take place on August 17 and 18 in Montreal.

“Our organizing model is based on the principle that everyone has a role to play to recruit new members: from rank and file to elected leadership,” said John Aman, Unifor Organizing Director.

“This Forum will be a perfect chance to put those words into action,” said Aman.

Two high-profile speakers will address delegates. The first is Elaine Bernard, the Executive Director of the Labour and Worklife Program at Harvard University and dedicated trade union activist. The second is Jane McAlevey, grassroots and trade union organizer and author (*Raising Expectations and Raising Hell*).

Delegates will also have the chance to participate in regional break-out groups and interactive workshops to learn more about Unifor’s organizing model and how they can help to recruit new members.

The forum takes place immediately before Canadian Council, also in Montreal.

The deadline to register is July 17.


Contact your local if you would like to attend. See also the pullout poster in this edition of Uniforum. 

Photo spotlight

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The float was built by Unifor activists, including Ontario Regional Council Pride committee members Craig Hallikainen and Kellie Scanlan.



An array of people show their support for LGBTQ issues and full equality for all.

Rain or shine, we’ve got pride

The rain clouds couldn’t keep LGBTQ activists, staff and allies away from Pride events in Toronto on June 27 and 28 as part of the annual Pride festivities.

The union participated in the Dyke March and the main parade event, as well as took part in the community fair where participants stopped by to find out more about the union and its efforts around workers’ rights and LGBTQ rights.

Unifor Ontario Regional Director Katha Fortier attended Pride for the second year in a row.

“Unions have been at the forefront of the fight for equal rights and Pride events are an important reminder of how far we’ve come together and the work we still need to do,” said Fortier.


Unifor Organizer Kellie Scanlan co-ordinated the union’s efforts for weekend, and said she was pleased at how many people came out to show their support, despite the dreary weather.

“There are many ways members contribute to the union – getting involved in LGBTQ issues in their workplace and the community is one of them.

“Over the years, we’ve made a lot of progress on creating more welcoming workplaces and stopping harassment, but we can’t take for granted that this is the case everywhere – it isn’t.”

While Pride festivities kicked off in May, there are many events still to come right across the country.

To find a Pride event in your area, visit: unifor.org/pride.

Pride materials, including a range of T-shirts, flags and other items can be ordered from the workroom in the national office. 

Reporter wins labour journalism award


Metroland Media Toronto journalist Joanna Lavoie won this year’s Unifor Local 87-M Labour Journalism Award for her coverage of a labour dispute at one of Toronto’s oldest and largest social service agencies.

Lavoie’s reporting took

readers inside the first-ever strike at the 78-year-old WoodGreen Community Services last year when 500 staff walked off the job after half a year of negotiations. The strike lasted two weeks.

Lavoie’s win shows that great labour reporting

happens across the media, from community papers such as the Beach-Riverdale Mirror to major outlets newspapers,” said Unifor 87-M President Paul Morse.

Her work shows the importance of labour issues to the community, he said. 

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


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"From the beginning we prioritized better wages for Air Canada's newer agents, and we're very pleased we achieved that," said Cheryl Robinson, Unifor Local 2002 President.

"Wage increases combined with improved benefits make this a good deal for all of our members."

"Many of our members made sacrifices for the company during tougher times," said Robinson.

"This makes real gains in benefits and job security for all of our Air Canada members."

Voting took place at membership meetings over a week in June. The contract is effective from March 1 to February 28, 2020. 

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Moose Jaw and Esterhazy. The discussion was lively, engaging, providing great feedback and suggestions for strengthening membership engagement in their locals.

It was the first of dozens of such meetings planned across Canada in the coming months. Another was held a few days later in St. Catharines, launching the town halls in Ontario.

The town halls are part of the important LUTF project launched by Unifor after the Presidents Conference in April.

"We are a diverse national union and we will only get stronger through greater communication and mobilization of our



Ken Lewenza with delegates to the first LUTF town hall.

Did you know?

The Local Union Task Force is a union wide initiative to engage Local Unions and members to assess the needs of members in local unions and make recommendations to build stronger local unions with stronger membership engagement.

members from coast to coast to coast. The heart of that mobilization is the local," Unifor National President Jerry Dias said.

To join the discussion online, go to [Facebook.com/UniforCanada](https://www.facebook.com/UniforCanada). A discussion paper for the task force can be found at [Unifor.org](https://www.unifor.org). 

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Council inspires
delegates" on page 1

Kicking off the Council, Atlantic Regional Director, Lana Payne said: "I want to thank all of you for the work you do in our workplaces, our union and our communities."

To an enthusiastic audience, Payne outlined the ways in which the last year has been one of defending workers' rights, enforcing democracy, organizing new members and advancing equity and justice.

Throughout the weekend, delegates discussed and debated important issues including organizing, violence against women, human rights, fair wages and job security.

Delegates stressed the need for Unifor to be a champion for economic and social rights at the bargaining table, in our communities and in the political sphere.

A focus of the Council was the upcoming federal election. "Unifor was born to challenge ourselves, our members and our communities. And we were born to change the politics of this country," stressed Jerry Dias, Unifor National President.

Roch Leblanc, Atlantic Campaign Coordinator, outlined the region's plans to engage members in the federal election. The plan focusses on listening to members' concerns, providing information and analysis and supporting members to get involved in the election campaign.




Susan Gill, President of Local 4600 in Cape Breton, with Christina Ashe of Local 4606 and Jimmy Callahan of Local 4603, made a presentation about the Bill 1 fight.

"We are building a union that we can all be proud of," said Lisa Martin, newly elected Chair of the Atlantic Regional Council. "We are making important gains for our members and we are building our strength."

A highlight of the weekend was an emotional and moving address from President of Unifor Local 4600, Susan Gill. She expressed thanks for the

support Nova Scotia health care workers received in their fight against the government's attack on workers' rights in Bill 1. "We were victorious because of the incredible solidarity and support we received from this amazing union!"

In addition to passing numerous resolutions, the Council also held an election for vacant positions on the Regional Executive. 

BC mariners told to call U.S. Coast Guard

Mariners in the Vancouver area were told during a recent power outage to call the U.S. Coast Guard in the case of an emergency.

“Stephen Harper has taken us to a pretty sad place when an emergency in Canadian waters requires an American response,” said Gavin McGarrigle, Unifor’s BC Area Director.

An outage at the Marine Traffic and Communication

Services (MTCS) centre in Victoria earlier this month affected its ability to regulate shipping movements and answer distress calls, affecting the areas of Vancouver, Howe Sound, and the Strait of Georgia.

“The Harper government’s cuts to the coast guard are compromising marine safety,” said McGarrigle.

“Vital public services that protect people and

wildlife on our coast are being eroded by a short-sighted government that doesn’t listen to coast guard officers.”

During the outage, the coast guard officials were asking mariners to contact the Comox MTCS base (slated for closure in 2016) or the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Harper government’s cuts to the marine safety network have hit both

coasts. Four bases have been closed so far this year in Saint John, St. John’s, Ucluelet and Vancouver. Four more are scheduled to close in 2015 in Thunder Bay, Rivière au Renard, St. Anthony, and Comox in 2016.

Restoring funding to the coast guard would cost \$5.5 million per year, or a quarter of the government’s income-splitting program introduced in 2015. **U**

Unifor members gain leadership skills

Several Unifor members from across Canada took part in the recent Governor General’s Community Leadership Conference (GGCLC), an annual two-week leadership development session for future business, labour, public sector and community leaders.

“The GGCLC is a very intense session designed to specifically provide insight and education to

develop better leaders for our country,” said Mark Mathewson, President of Local 848 and a member of the NEB.

Mathewson was one of the participants in the conference along with Telecommunications Director Naureen Rizvi from Local 707, Kelly Rouche and Amy Huziak from CULR-1, Christine Maclin from Local 195, Bruce Farad from Local 350, Chad Stroud from



Some of the Unifor participants to the GGCLC.

Local 2182 and Ricardo de Menezes from Local 777.

In all, 250 people took part in the 15-day conference, which involved fellow unionists as well as business, academia, government representatives.

Participants were formed into groups and went to

communities across Canada to learn local perspectives on various issues, as well as that of others on their teams from different walks of life.

The goal is to make them better leaders by helping them see issues from more than one perspective. **U**

Bombardier workers ratify contracts

Members of two Unifor locals working at Bombardier Aerospace in Downsview ratified new collective agreements with the company on June 28, enhancing their pensions and job security.

“This deal represents a significant gain for our members in a difficult time for the business jet market,” said Scott McIlmoyle, President of Unifor Local 112.

Members of Unifor Local 112, who work in production at the plant, voted 77 per cent in favour of their new contract. Members of Unifor Local 673, who work in technical, office and clerical positions, voted 78 per cent in favour.

“The company looked for significant cost reductions from our members, but we kept bargaining past the deadline to reach this deal,” said Mary Ellen McIlmoyle,

President of Local 673.

Wage improvements were achieved for both locals in each of the second and third year of the agreements at 1 and 1.25 per cent respectively. The new contracts expire on June 22, 2018.

Under the new collective agreements, contract workers, known as complimentary workers at the plant, will be made permanent.

Pension increases were also achieved in both agreements in addition to a retirement incentive program.

“Early retirement initiatives will create employment opportunities for young people and will help offset recent layoff announcements at the facility,” said Dawn Cartwright, Unifor Aerospace Director. **U**