

LIVEWIRE



2017 – BUILDING MOMENTUM - A year of challenges and change

Thanks for taking the time to read this newsletter! This winter edition comes a little later than usual, due in part to the year-ending hectic activities including an aggressive round of negotiations and continuing media/political commentary surrounding Manitoba Hydro. I wish I could say things will slow down in 2017 but I don't expect they will. We continue to fight back against the austerity agenda being promoted by the provincial government which now includes some very aggressive and over-zealous staff reduction targets that will do little to help Manitoba Hydro, its employees or the rate-payers in the short or long term. It is becoming very clear that we need to continue our preparations to fight the possibility of privatization of our public utility.

We have been preparing for this battle for some time and if there is a silver lining to the issues at hand it is you, the members. Your ongoing support allows us to continue building momentum and face the challenges ahead. With ratification of a new collective agreement now behind us it is good to know that we continue to have your support as we plan steps to defend our work and our company. The cost-share campaign you recently approved at our February membership meeting is now making its way through channels to receive approval from CUPE National in late-March. We will announce the decision once we have it. In the meantime, we will address the coming implementation of the Voluntary Departure Program (VDP) and will continue to work with our members through this difficult time. We ask for your patience on this issue as there are still more questions than answers but rest assured that everyone will have the information they need to make an informed decision when the time comes.

In closing, a big thank you to all who have come out to support us as we move into new territory. They say challenges bring opportunities and that may be true but I believe that the challenges we are facing are bringing out the best in us. I'd also like to thank the communications team who make this newsletter possible. Take care and take care of each other.

In solidarity,
Chris Mravinec, President
CUPE Local 998

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COMMITTEE REPORTS

➤ **Communications Committee** – Committee Chair, Lisa Horishney

In the Unions continued efforts to keep the membership informed and aware of current and anticipated issues, events and information, we are reviewing the list of Communicators. We would like to recognize the ongoing support of our current Communicators and to extend an invitation to any member who would like to become our part of our Communicators. There is a need for updating, additions and revisions. The goal is to spread the information, as soon as it comes to our attention. **The Union is the Membership!**

The membership can only be active and stay informed if they are aware of upcoming situations and changes within their Union. Current and new Communicators will receive valued updates and information, through the use of emails, to keep their designated areas aware of the information they receive. In some areas, Shop Stewards or Executive Members may fill this role.

CALL FOR COMMUNICATORS

We are seeking to grow our network and need your help. Communication is always important but the current issues facing us as Manitoba Hydro employees and the uncertainty ahead reinforce the importance of updating our members with relevant information and having them join in the conversation. While email blasts have proven to be very effective in getting members to check our website, on occasion we will have subject matter which is better shared by direct communication. Direct communication is often more effective because it comes from someone the member knows or is familiar with, can promote individual conversations and fosters the sharing of ideas. We want to encourage appropriate and timely conversations to raise the awareness of all our members on issues that affect us.

Please consider joining our team of dedicated Communicators to help us achieve these goals and strengthen our communications. If you are interested in becoming a Communicator please contact the Communications Committee Chair Lisa Horishney or the CUPE Office for more information.

If you would like to become a new Communicator we can provide a short orientation session were you will receive an information kit that explains your role.

One last thought... A big thank you to the existing Communicators for your efforts in sharing information with members in the workplace! Your active participation is appreciated and needed more than ever going forward.

[Lisa Horishney](#)
(204) 360 - 4976

➤ **Education Committee – Committee Chair, Kelli Howell**

- January 5th & 6th, 2017, Introduction to Stewarding attended by new Stewards Caroline Shaver and Fred Carpenter.
- April 6th & 7th, 2017, Mike Wright to attend Introduction to Health & Safety Workshop.
- April 28th & 29th, 2017, Introduction to Stewarding, new Steward Dominic Bourgeois registered.
 - Mel Myers Labour Conference March 16th & 17th, 2017 attending: Chris Mravinec, Darryl Forbes, Brigitte Sylvia, Caroline Shaver, Fred Carpenter, George Burton
 - Caroline Shaver registered for Steward Learning Series modules: Green Action for Stewards, Taking on Privatization, Note Taking

TRUSTEES NEEDED!

This is a call-out for both a Trustee Nominating Committee and for Trustees. The committee helps to run the trustee election by ensuring candidates fill out nomination forms, reviewing bios, and overseeing the voting process. This is (by its nature) a short term position, and an ideal way to get a first exposure to a union activity!

Nominations will soon be open (once a committee is selected) for a single, three year Trustee position. This nomination period will be open until April 13, 2017, so now is the time to seriously consider if you'd like to take a role in actively understanding how our Local operates, from the finances to the rules of our Constitution.

Please contact **Kelli Howell** before 3:00 pm March 3, 2017 if you are interested in being a part of the Trustee Nominating Committee. The committee will meet the following week and will be considering electronic voting.

EX-100-100

President	Chris Mravinec	415-5214 c 391-7939	cmravinec@hydro.mb.ca
1st Vice-President	Denis Côté	360-4150	dcote@hydro.mb.ca
2nd Vice-President	Michael Wright	360-4234 c 479-6119	mcwright@hydro.mb.ca
Recording Secretary	Lisa Horishney	360-4976	lhishney@hydro.mb.ca
Treasurer	Michael Kubrakovich	360-4457	mkubrakovich@hydro.mb.ca
Executives	Colleen Kuhlman	360-7912	ckuhlman@hydro.mb.ca
	Marlene Schlag	360-5087	mschlag@hydro.mb.ca
	Lennon Stevens	360-7107	lhstevens@hydro.mb.ca
	Ray Hiebert	360-5022	rhiebert@hydro.mb.ca
Brandon Chief Steward	Darryl Forbes	360-4246	dforbes@hydro.mb.ca
	Rick Bosiak	204 727-9237	rabosiak@hydro.mb.ca
	Kelli Howell	360-5077 c 390-0278	khowell@hydro.mb.ca

➤ **Grievance Committee – Committee Chair Kelli Howell**

Committee Members – Karen Sinclair, Francesca Lonigro, Melissa De Vriendt

- Filed grievance on behalf of member as WCB, approved sit/stand work station but corp. has not purchased the station. The member has missed work due to not having a new workstation. Meeting with Corp. December 9, 2016, will contact the member to meet with us in March 2017.
- Grievance filed, HR request to recover overpayment of benefits, member filed paperwork but was not followed up on by payroll staff, we feel member not responsible. Step I complete, the corp. believes the member is fully responsible.
 - We had the CUPE lawyer have a look at the plan text and in her findings we are in a good position to go to Step II and may be successful.
 - We will go forward to Step II
- Policy grievance for wording on letters of offer, “admin I in an admin III position”, that classification does not exist in our Collective Agreement. Met with HR August 4, 2016.
 - We attended a presentation that HR has put together regarding all the progression and salary treatments.
 - Contacted Jeff France in ER to set up meeting with Matt Levitt to hear this grievance.
- Member previously given 5% “bump” for performing duties of a higher classification. Some duties taken away and the 5% as well, however, not the original duties the 5% was given for in the first place. Step II was heard by Paul Chard, grievance was denied. Step III heard by VP Lloyd Kuczek October 7, 2016 denied.
 - Arbitration complete, waiting on decision from Michael Werrier.
- IT department – Contracting out for *a minimum of three months*. A 10.5 “*such employment shall not exceed a period of 3 months*” will seek arbitration.
 - Signed resolution at bargaining.
- Member on project work has had 5% bump for additional duties; this was taken away as corp. says the project is finished and no longer doing additional duties. Our member says the duties still there, nothing has changed.
 - Step I complete, will advance to Step II, the member is away until mid-March 2017.
- Member terminated for not following reporting protocol, ER has confirmed that the member has contacted the AFM to seek help, grievance filed.
- Member has voiced numerous complaints about supervisor in area, mgmt and HR have done everything necessary to help the situation. Member has been advised to contact Respectful Workplace Officer and look into Human Rights complaint.

Other Ongoing Grievances, etc.

- Adoptive Leave – Resolved at bargaining.
 - MED – Engineers doing the work of CUPE TA’s – we will have to decide whether to meet with the committee or go back for arbitration, meetings to be scheduled in spring.
 - Purchasing Dept. – workplace review ongoing now
 - Member frustrated with communications with supervisor and manager, quality & quantity of work and refusing requests to meet about the issues, grievance filed. Mgmt. has met with the member.
 - This member has been advised to seek help from the Respectful Workplace Officer and to file a Human Rights Complaint.
 - We are willing to meet with the member and management to help resolve on-going issues
 - Re-class grievance – Appeal has been submitted
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VOLUNTARY DEPARTURE PROGRAM

Many members have asked questions of a similar nature regarding the VDP. We share those concerns and have raised those same questions since the VDP was first proposed by the Corporation during bargaining. Unfortunately there are fewer answers than questions at this time since the plan isn't fully developed and hasn't been shared with employees or unions. We've grouped the questions into broad themes below but since there have been no details provided we do not have complete answers at this time. The following questions are still outstanding:

Q: Length of VDP: Will they offer a single wave? Will it be on a continual basis? Will it be a one-time offering?

A: The Letter of Understanding (LOU) for the VDP remains in force for the life of this agreement but may be cancelled by the Corporation with 30 days notice. They have not confirmed if the VDP will be offered more than once so these specific questions are outstanding with the Corporation.

Q: Salary Continuance or Bridging: Can the lump sum payout (2 weeks per year of service to a maximum of 30 weeks) be used to bridge me to my future retirement date?

A: The topic of allowing Salary Continuance was brought to the Corporation's attention by your Negotiation Team during bargaining. The Corporation wouldn't commit to it at that time but did take it under consideration. No answer has been provided yet and so it remains an outstanding question with the Corporation.

Q: Eligibility: If I am eligible for retirement (meeting the Rule of 80) will I be automatically granted VDP?

A: This is another point brought up in bargaining and with no answer received it is an outstanding question with the Corporation.

Q: Pre-retirement leave: Can I accept VDP and then use vacation and/or other credits to push back my retirement date?

A: Similar to the salary continuance issue mentioned above, we have no confirmation on this point yet but expect it will be made clear when the VDP is offered.

Q: Will the DSM/Power Smart staff (if removed) be part of the 900 reductions announced?

A: We have heard conflicting reports but have received no confirmation from Hydro to date.

There are some questions that we can, at this point, answer with confidence based on our understanding of information provided to date and the specifics of the collective agreement and corporate policy:

Q: Timelines: When is this being rolled out?

A: The Corporation has stated that they expect to roll VDP "in spring". This is a vague timeline but we expect more information will be shared soon since our VDP LOU specifically states Manitoba Hydro will meet with us and consider our input prior to the implementation. It is unlikely we will be allowed to share details of the plan with members prior to it being formally announced by the company; but when it is announced we will provide members with as much information as we can and be available for consultation throughout the process.

...VDP – continued

Q: The “Voluntary” in VDP: Can I ask to be part of the VDP? Will I be eligible?

A: Although any employee can request to participate in the VDP and their request will be considered by Manitoba Hydro, there is no guarantee the company will offer it to them because they retain the right to determine who is ultimately eligible. It is not clear at this time if the company will offer VDP to non-volunteering employees or if they will only select from those who volunteer. In either case, once there is agreement between both parties the terms of the plan will be in effect.

Q: VDP versus redundancy: Shouldn't I refuse a VDP, get declared redundant, and get the bigger payout?

A: It is important for members to realize that there is no guarantee their position will be declared redundant if they turn down the VDP. We caution members against gambling on a better payout by turning down the VDP with the expectation their position will be declared redundant.

Q: Payouts: What happens to all my credits and benefits that I've built up if I accept this?

A: If you accept a VDP, we expect you would receive the payouts normally associated with any amicable termination of employment (as opposed to being dismissed or fired). The same is true for terminations resulting from redundancy. This is reinforced in corporate policy P592, section 2.1, which states eligible benefits are paid out to employees in cases of resignation, retirement or redundancy. Typical payouts include:

- Severance pay, see Article B 2.1
- Long service recognition credits, see Article F 12.1
- Vacation credits (balance, accrued, or banked) , see Article F 13.1
- Banked overtime, see D 1.10.4
- Vested sick leave, see policy P523

The long and short of it is that we believe a benefit that offers an extra sum of money to members if they want to retire or leave the company is a good thing. We will keep you up to date as information becomes available, and will work with the corporation to ensure the plan is as beneficial to our membership as possible.

Please see our [VDP - Letter of Understanding](#) for details: “Attachment #2”, page 9.

➤ **Wages & Agreements Committee** – Committee Chair Denis Cote

Are you a community-minded individual? Do you like to help ensure everyone gets a fair break? Do you believe in good pay for good work? Did you know that there are many volunteer opportunities in your Local for personal and professional development, all while working to build up a better Union for all our members? Being an active member of the Local lets you discover possibilities like:

- Working to better the Collective Agreement;
- Attending union-based training and schools;
- Working with members to better understand the agreement;
- Addressing members concerns with Managements, ensuring our agreement is being followed correctly;
- Participating in legal procedures (Arbitration) , when applicable;
- Attending Conventions, when applicable;
- Working with other Locals and groups towards bigger goals (e.g.: Manitoba Federation of Labour or CUPE Manitoba); Networking with other CUPE Members throughout Manitoba Hydro;
- and so many more...

In fact, many of the advantages and perks of being an active union member is about being part of a team that is able to help shape the direction of our Local. If you are interested, opportunities may exist today in several aspects of our Local, including as Members at Large in committees and as Stewards. Please let that Committee Chair, Chief Steward, or the union office know if you are interested in helping CUPE 998!



SEEKING STEWARDS and COMMITTEE MEMBERS!

Would you like to learn more about our Collective Agreement, work with members to ensure their rights are protected, or participate in improving our contract? CUPE 998 is actively searching for new Stewards to add to our great team. They're there to assist members to better understand the agreement, address member concerns with management, and represent members during grievances. Steward Training is provided, as are regular meetings to update skills and share union updates. If you are interested in becoming a Steward, please contact the Chief Steward, [Kelli Howell](#).

The Wages & Agreements Committee, charged with maintaining our Collective Agreement between negotiations as well as preparing for bargaining, is seeking a new member. If you are interested in joining the committee, please contact the chair, [Denis Côté](#).

CUPE 998 50th ANNIVERSARY

GOOD VIBES, GOOD FRIENDS, GOOD TIMES

July 6th, 2016 marked a huge milestone for CUPE 998 being our 50th Anniversary as a chartered labour union in Manitoba. To help celebrate this momentous occasion a social evening was planned and open for all to attend. CUPE members past and present gathered at the Army, Navy and Air Force Veterans hall to party like it was 1966 all over again on October 21st, 2016.

All enjoyed the night with live music, good friends, decorations, lots of food & a beautiful anniversary cake. The event exceeded our expectations and covered our initial expenses plus enough left over to fund two large family Christmas hampers with a final \$900 donation to the Christmas Cheer Board.

MANY THANKS TO THE SILENT AUCTION DONATORS:

Academy Lanes, Alt Hotel, Assiniboine Credit Union, Canada Inn, Cora's, COPE342, CUPE National, Danny's Whole Hog, Fairmont Hotel, FrogBox, Golf Dome, Hartland Archery, Lakeview Resort, MB Federation of Labour, Mariaggis, Marigold, Paintball Paradise, Radisson Hotel, Rae and Jerry's, Saikel Indoor Cyle, The Keg, Vertical Adventures, Viscount Gort, Wpg Labour Council

UPCOMING EVENTS

- International Women's Day – March 8th, 2017
- National Day of Mourning – April 28th, 2017
- MayWorks Festival - April 28, 2017 – May 29, 2017
- CUPE Manitoba Convention, Portage La Prairie – May 2nd – 5th, 2017
- General Membership Meeting – May 16th, 2017
- Pride Week Winnipeg May 26th – June 4th, 2017