



**60 YEARS OF SERVICE**  
— by and For Members —  
**of CUPE local 998**

# Message from the Local 998 President

As we celebrate the 60th Anniversary of CUPE Local 998, I am proud to reflect on the generations of members who have built our union into the strong organization it is today.

Since receiving our charter on July 6, 1966, Local 998 members have played a vital role in supporting Manitoba Hydro and recently Efficiency Manitoba, and the people of Manitoba. Through six decades of change, our members have remained dedicated to their work while standing together to improve wages, benefits, working conditions, and workplace rights.

This milestone belongs to every member, past and present, whose commitment and solidarity have helped shape our history. The achievements we enjoy today were made possible by those who came before us and by the continued involvement of members who remain engaged in our union.

On behalf of the Executive Board, thank you to all those who have contributed to the success of CUPE Local 998 over the past 60 years. As we celebrate this remarkable anniversary, we honour our past, recognize our present, and look forward to a strong future together.

Thank you for being part of 60 years of solidarity, strength, and service.

In solidarity,

**Michelle Bergen**  
*President, CUPE Local 998*





## Celebrating 60 Years of CUPE Local 998

On July 6, 2026, CUPE Local 998 proudly celebrates sixty years of representing the clerical, technical, administrative, and professional employees of Manitoba Hydro and, more recently, the employees of Efficiency Manitoba.

For six decades, Local 998 members have played an essential role in supporting one of Manitoba's most important public institutions. Behind every customer interaction, every major project, every technological advancement, every energy efficiency initiative, and every operational success are dedicated workers whose efforts help keep Manitoba Hydro and Efficiency Manitoba serving Manitobans every day.

The history of CUPE Local 998 is more than a story about collective agreements and workplace rights. It is a story about people. It is the story of employees who came together to build a stronger voice in the workplace, improve working conditions, support one another, and create opportunities for future generations of workers.

Since receiving its charter on July 6, 1966, Local 998 has grown alongside Manitoba Hydro, adapting to changing workplaces, evolving technologies, and shifting economic conditions. Through six decades of collective bargaining, advocacy, and member engagement, the union has helped secure important workplace protections, improve benefits, strengthen public services, and ensure employees have a meaningful voice in decisions affecting their work and their lives.

This anniversary is more than a celebration of longevity. It is a celebration of the thousands of members who have built this Local through solidarity, participation, and collective action. Their efforts have strengthened workplaces, improved lives, protected public services, and ensured future generations of workers benefit from the gains achieved over the past sixty years.

As we celebrate this milestone anniversary, we honour the members, stewards, executive officers, bargaining committees, activists, and volunteers who built this union. Their commitment, determination, and solidarity have shaped the past sixty years and continue to guide the future of CUPE Local 998.

# Building a Strong Foundation

When CUPE Local 998 was chartered on July 6, 1966, the workplace looked very different than it does today. Administrative work was completed almost entirely by hand. Filing systems consisted of paper records, correspondence was typed on manual typewriters, and calculations were often performed without the benefit of computers.

Employees had limited opportunities to collectively address workplace concerns and negotiate improvements to wages, benefits, and working conditions. The creation of Local 998 provided clerical and technical employees with a formal voice in the workplace and established a foundation that would support generations of workers.

The early years required commitment and perseverance from members who believed that employees should have a meaningful role in shaping their workplace. Through collective action and participation, members built a union that would go on to negotiate workplace improvements benefiting thousands of workers over the next six decades.

In the beginning, relations with the employer were difficult, as both union members and management learned their new roles and responsibilities. The union was not welcomed at first by the employer and it was a huge transition for many of the members.

**Sandra Oakley was a Local 998 member and served on the Executive. She attended Labour College in 1979 and recalled:**

***“When I came back to the local in the 90’s as the CUPE Staff Representative the situation was completely different, the relationship between the union and management was a lot better.”***

The union had proven itself to both the members and the employer.





## Growing Alongside Manitoba Hydro

As Manitoba Hydro expanded throughout Manitoba, CUPE members grew alongside the organization. New generating stations, transmission infrastructure, customer service operations, and technological advancements created opportunities for employees to develop specialized skills and expertise.

Throughout the decades, CUPE members have supported every area of the corporation. Whether assisting customers, managing records, supporting major capital projects, maintaining information systems, processing payroll, coordinating procurement activities, supporting engineering teams, or analyzing complex business processes, members have helped ensure Manitoba Hydro could continue delivering reliable service to Manitobans.

The work performed by CUPE members has evolved significantly over time, but their contribution to the success of the organization has remained constant.

According to Mark Hadder,  
Past President of Local 998  
(2010-2012):

***“Relations were really good with Bob Brennan (Mb Hydro CEO 1990-2011). There would be discussions that would then set us on a path, continue on a path to get things done. CUPE held an energy sector conference in Winnipeg (members in the sector from across Canada) and we were on such good terms with Bob that he offered conference rooms in new Hydro building. That was unheard of to see such good relations with senior management. Bob even addressed the members. It was a great event.”***

# Changes Through the Decades

## The 1960s: Building a Collective Voice

When Local 998 received its charter in 1966, Manitoba Hydro was still a relatively young Crown corporation. Administrative work was completed almost entirely by hand. Filing systems consisted of paper records, correspondence was typed on manual typewriters, and calculations were often completed without computers.

The focus during this decade was simple but significant: building a strong union, establishing representation rights, and creating a framework for collective bargaining.

## The 1970s: Growth and Opportunity

The 1970s brought significant growth to both Manitoba Hydro and CUPE Local 998.

As Manitoba Hydro expanded generating stations, transmission infrastructure, and customer service operations across the province, the demand for skilled clerical, administrative, and technical employees continued to increase.

This decade also marked the beginning of important advancements in workplace equality. Women were entering the workforce in greater numbers and increasingly pursuing long-term careers.

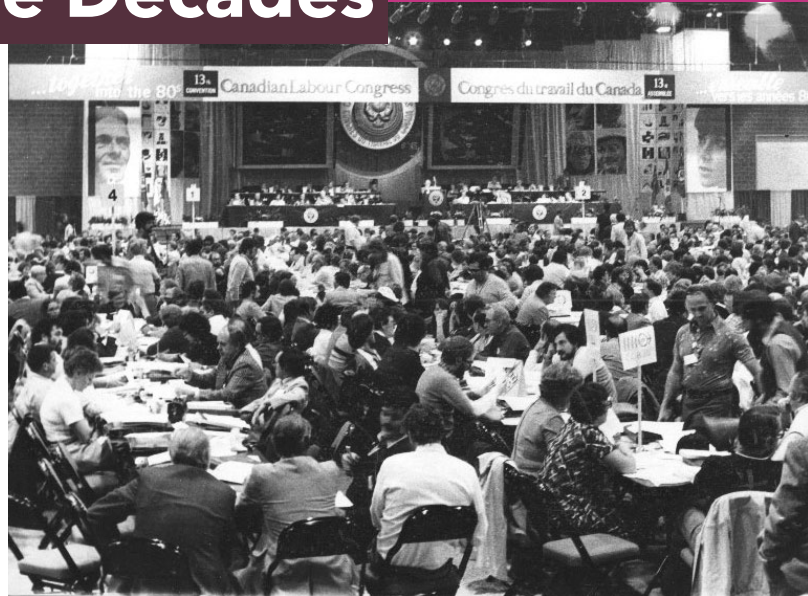
Members successfully negotiated important workplace improvements, including maternity leave provisions and enhanced benefits. These gains reflected changing societal expectations and helped establish many of the family-supportive policies that would continue to evolve over future decades.

The 1970s also saw growing member involvement in steward programs, labour education, and union leadership development, helping strengthen the Local's ability to advocate for members.

## The 1980s: Modernization and New Rights

The 1980s brought significant technological change.

Computers began appearing in workplaces, gradually replacing many manual processes that had existed for decades. Administrative functions that once required extensive paperwork slowly transitioned toward digital systems.



For many employees, this required learning entirely new ways of performing their work. Training and adaptation became increasingly important as technology transformed the workplace.

The decade also produced several major bargaining achievements.

Members secured paid maternity leave in 1986, representing a significant advancement for working families. In 1988, paternity leave was introduced, recognizing the important role fathers play in caring for their children.

As Manitoba Hydro continued to grow, Local 998 strengthened its role as a respected advocate for clerical, technical, and administrative employees throughout the corporation.

## The 1990s: Building on Success

The 1990s represented an important period of growth and maturity for CUPE Local 998. Building on the gains achieved during the 1970s and 1980s, the union continued to strengthen workplace protections, modernize collective agreement language, and advocate for the changing needs of members.

One of the most significant achievements of the decade came in 1991 with the introduction of 17 weeks of unpaid parental leave. This milestone expanded family leave rights beyond maternity leave and recognized the important role both parents play in caring for a new child.

Throughout the decade, family-related leave provisions continued to evolve. Collective agreement language surrounding family

responsibility leave, bereavement leave, and other leave entitlements became more comprehensive, helping members balance workplace obligations with personal and family responsibilities.

The 1990s also brought significant technological and organizational change within Manitoba Hydro. As the corporation modernized operations and introduced new technologies, CUPE Local 998 worked diligently to protect bargaining unit work, maintain job security provisions, and ensure members had access to opportunities created by workplace change.

Protecting internal career opportunities became a major focus during this period. The union advocated for strong language surrounding promotions, reclassifications, and internal hiring processes, helping ensure that members could continue building meaningful careers within the organization.

Throughout the 1990s, CUPE Local 998 continued to strengthen important workplace protections, including seniority rights, promotions and career progression opportunities, grievance procedures, leave provisions, fair treatment, and job security protections.

By the end of the decade, Local 998 had firmly established itself as a respected and influential voice for clerical, technical, information technology, and administrative employees within Manitoba Hydro

## The 2000s: A Digital Workplace

The new millennium brought rapid technological advancement.

Email became the primary form of communication. Electronic records replaced many paper-based systems. Employees increasingly relied on digital tools, databases, and enterprise software to perform their work.

The roles performed by Local 998 members became more specialized and increasingly knowledge-based. Information technology professionals, business analysts, procurement specialists, project coordinators, communications professionals, and technical support staff became essential contributors to Manitoba Hydro's operations.

The union also expanded its focus on leadership development, member education, and communication. Members became more engaged through conferences, training opportunities, steward development programs, and participation in the broader labour movement.

## The 2010s: Engagement and Inclusion

The 2010s brought continued technological innovation while also placing greater emphasis on workplace culture and employee well-being.

Issues such as respectful workplaces, diversity and inclusion, mental health awareness, employee wellness, and work-life balance became increasingly important.

Local 998 continued to advocate for fair treatment, healthy workplaces, and opportunities for professional development.

In 2000, CUPE 998 launched The Livewire newsletter to keep members informed and connected. Today, that publication evolved into The Powerline, alongside monthly member newsletters including Wired in for Manitoba Hydro members and Watt Matters for Efficiency Manitoba members.

Member engagement also increased significantly during this period.

**Wally Skomoroh, former CUPE Staff Representative, reflected on the growth of member involvement:**

***“For many years, the early years, the local was isolated, members didn’t get involved in CUPE events, training or committees. But since 2014 there has been a shift to bring more involved and therefore to function more as a union, it’s taken on more of a professional union quality, which is better for the members and I think also for the employer as they are now dealing with leadership in L998 differently, positively.”***





Michelle Bergen, President of CUPE Local 998, reflected on the experience:

***“The pandemic created enormous challenges for workers. Members faced uncertainty, stress, changing workplace conditions, health concerns, and the emotional toll of navigating an unprecedented global crisis. Despite these difficulties, CUPE Local 998 remained committed to ensuring members had a voice during a time when many felt vulnerable and unheard.”***

## **The 2020s: Resilience and Transformation**

The current decade has already proven to be one of the most transformative periods in Local 998’s history.

The COVID-19 pandemic dramatically changed how employees worked and interacted. Remote work became a necessity for many positions, while new health and safety protocols reshaped workplace operations.

Members demonstrated tremendous resilience while continuing to provide critical services during a period of unprecedented uncertainty.

Through advocacy and discussions with the employer, CUPE Local 998 successfully helped prevent layoffs during the pandemic, protecting jobs and supporting members during one of the most difficult periods in modern history.

The decade also marked an important milestone with the successful integration of Efficiency Manitoba employees into Local 998 and the negotiation of their first collective agreement in 2021.

Technology continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace. Artificial intelligence, advanced analytics, automation, digital collaboration tools, and workforce modernization initiatives are creating both opportunities and challenges for workers.

In 2025, members achieved another historic milestone with the addition of transgender affirming care benefits to the collective agreement, reflecting the Local’s ongoing commitment to equity and inclusion.

# Bargaining Achievements Through the Decades

The union has bargained 24 collective agreements with Manitoba Hydro and successfully negotiated the first collective agreement with Efficiency Manitoba in 2021.

There have also been significant improvements in vacation entitlements. In 1965, employees received four weeks paid vacation after 25 years of service. Today, members receive six weeks vacation after 20 years of service, reflecting decades of progress achieved through collective bargaining.

Bargaining in 2016 put the committee and the members through a real grind.

***“It was when the provincial government was not union friendly and the threat of a wage freeze was discouraging. But the CUPE members were able to see a storm coming, stood together, considered what was best they could do in the circumstances, and settled. It was tough for the members but they did the honourable thing,” recounts Wally Skomoroh. “That round of bargaining taught everyone how important it is to have a supportive government.”***

Some of the ongoing work of the CUPE local executive is often unseen but means a lot to individual members. For example, reviewing jurisdictional positions takes time, research

and consultation. We have been actively reviewing positions and job responsibilities across the organization to ensure that work remains properly aligned with bargaining unit classifications. As organizations evolve, job duties and operational needs often shift. The union continues to review situations where bargaining unit work may be reassigned or where responsibilities expand beyond the original scope of a position. To get this done for members means reviewing job descriptions, identifying where bargaining unit work may be shifting outside established roles, ensuring classifications reflect the work actually being performed, and raising concerns when boundaries are unclear. These reviews help ensure that the work performed by members is properly recognized and classified.

Pay equity was another important benefit for the members. “I worked on the pay equity committee. It was drawn from all the bargaining units and from management – it was precedent-setting. Being part of change that was so important for members taught me something I’ve never forgotten: all work is important, and all work deserves respect. One of the workers at a generating station told me he was ‘just a nobody, sweeping floors.’ That stayed with me. Of course his work was important. There’s no such thing as a lesser job. Work is work, and you should be able to feel proud of what you do – and be properly compensated and appreciated for doing it,” recalls past President (1986–88), Shirley Denesiuk.

## Major milestones

1974	Introduction of 11 weeks unpaid maternity leave
1977	Maternity leave increased to 17 weeks unpaid
1986	Paid maternity leave negotiated
1988	Six weeks unpaid paternity leave introduced
1991	Introduction of 17 weeks unpaid parental leave
2016	Improvements to adoptive parent leave provisions
2021	First Efficiency Manitoba collective agreement negotiated
2025	Transgender affirming care added to the collective agreement
2026	CUPE Local 998 celebrates 60 years of service by and for its members

Similarly, Bob Maes was President of Local 998 (1992-2006) when the corporation wanted to implement the 'pay equity' legislation. (Employers were required to ensure there was no difference between wages for men and women performing work of 'equal or compatible value' in public service.) We teamed up with the other unions representing Hydro workers (IATSE, IBEW, CAW) and did the detailed look at classifications and pay scales. And just think, this was looking at office workers to linemen, such different jobs. We came up with changes that were good for the members and the corporation. There was some adjustment to wages and hours of work but it all balanced out. It was an example of how effective the unions were in dealing with changes in the organization."

**Bob Maes, President of  
Local 998 (1992-2006):**

***"When the corporation wanted to implement the 'pay equity' legislation we teamed up with the other unions representing Hydro workers (IATSE, IBEW, CAW) and did the detailed look at classifications and pay scales. And just think, this was looking at office workers to linemen, such different jobs. And we came up with changes good for the members and the corporation. There was some adjustment to wages and hours of work but it all balanced out. It was an example of how effective the unions were in dealing with organizational changes."***

(In 1986, employers were required to ensure there was no difference between wages for men and women performing work of 'equal or compatible value' in the public service.)

Here is another example of the practical ongoing work of the union. Career progression remains a key issue raised by members across multiple departments. CUPE L998 continues to advocate for clearer advancement pathways and appropriate recognition when job duties evolve over time. This work includes discussions around job progression frameworks, reclassification reviews when responsibilities increase, aligning job descriptions with the actual work being performed, and supporting professional development and mentorship opportunities. Creating clearer pathways for advancement helps ensure employees can build long-term careers within the organization while supporting workforce stability.

***"We negotiated a full time President (for the union) which led to way better representation. The opportunity to spend more time with HR (human resource department), to talk with them as people, without the pressure of bargaining, could really change the dynamics of what was going on in the local," remembers Mark Hadder.***

Importantly, the history of CUPE Local 998 is the history of its members. Generations of workers stood together to strengthen workplace rights, improve fairness, protect public services, and ensure future workers would benefit from the gains achieved through solidarity and collective bargaining. The sixtieth anniversary of the local is a good opportunity to step back and reflect on these achievements.

***"Something important to remember also, was access to CUPE National union resources. Having the lawyers, national reps and specialists made such a difference in bargaining. They were there for us as part of being in this national union. The specialists helped with understanding pensions and how communication was important for the membership. The national staff always had our back, which was essential in bargaining and all the other work we had to do for the members," recalls Mark Hadder.***



## Investing in Education and Leadership

Education has always been one of the most important tools available to union members.

Over the years, hundreds of Local 998 members have participated in steward training, labour education programs, conferences, bargaining

preparation courses, leadership development workshops, and labour college programs.

These opportunities have helped members develop the skills necessary to advocate for their coworkers, understand collective agreement rights, participate in negotiations, and provide leadership within the workplace and the broader labour movement.

**Jack G. Samyn**



**Bernie Quennelle**



**Randy Sinnock**



**Shirley Denesiuk**



**Joe Arbuckle**



# A Legacy of Leadership

The history of CUPE Local 998 has been shaped by generations of dedicated members who stepped forward to serve as leaders. Through periods of growth, technological change, workplace transformation, economic uncertainty, and collective bargaining challenges, these individuals helped guide the Local while remaining committed to the principles of solidarity, fairness, and member representation.

The strength of Local 998 today reflects the efforts of those who served before us. Each President built upon the work of previous leaders, ensuring that members' voices were heard and that the union continued to evolve alongside the changing workplace.

These Presidents, together with Executive Board members, Shop Stewards, bargaining committee members, activists, and volunteers, helped shape the direction of Local 998 over six decades. Their leadership contributed to significant bargaining achievements, improved workplace protections, expanded member rights, stronger public services, and a culture of member engagement that continues today.

The accomplishments of CUPE Local 998 are built upon the foundation established by these leaders and the thousands of members who supported them. Their collective efforts remind us that the strength of our union has always come

from members working together to improve their workplaces and build a stronger future for the generations that follow.

Shirley Denesiuk worked for Hydro for over 40 years and understood the value of the union as she became a Shop Steward and then was elected Local 998 President. "I grew up in a family that knew how hard it is to earn a living, to work for what you got. I learned how important it was to have a union and to be involved in your union. So today I constantly encourage everyone to get involved, to take pride in being in the union movement, and not to let your hard-won pay and benefits be eroded."

Liza Minotti did not have union experience when she started work for Hydro and became a CUPE member a few years ago. She wanted to help improve working conditions and she felt responsible for serving customers but didn't know how, until she understood the role of CUPE.

***"The union makes people feel like you're backed up, you're not small and insignificant, you are valued, you've got the power of the thousand members behind you. I realized the union would back me up and when the others in the department felt that, they were willing to speak out."***

## History of CUPE Local 998 Presidents

Years	President
1962 - 1967	K. T. Smith, Manitoba Hydro Employee Association (MHEA)
1968 - 1969	Keith G. McNamee
1970 - 1974	Barry Jackson
1975 - 1982	Jack G. Samyn
1982 - 1983	Bernie Quennelle
1984 - 1985	Randy Sinnock
1986 - 1988	Shirley Denesiuk
1988 - 1991	Joe Arbuckle
1992 - 2006	Bob Maes
2006 - 2009	Marlene Kuleza
2010 - 2012	Mark Hadder
2012 - 2018	Chris Mravinec
2018 -	Michelle Bergen



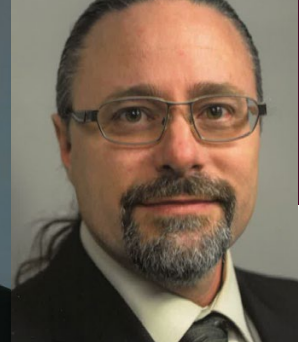
**Bob Maes**



**Marlene Kuleza**



**Mark Hadder**



**Chris Mravinec**

## The People Behind the Union

The history of CUPE Local 998 is not only the story of collective agreements and bargaining gains. It is also the story of thousands of members who volunteered their time to support their coworkers. Our history is deeply connected to the broader labour movement in Manitoba and across Canada. CUPE Local 998 was built on the foundation of solidarity, fairness, and collective action – values that continue to guide our union today. Throughout the years, our members have played an important role in advancing workplace rights, improving working conditions, and protecting good public sector jobs in Manitoba.


Over the past sixty years, members have served as Shop Stewards, bargaining committee members, executive officers, convention delegates, committee representatives, communicators, health and safety advocates, and mentors.

Paul Moist remembered the dedication of Local 998 leaders and stewards:

***“I recall we had a good sense of teamwork within the Local 998 Executive and stewards. They worked together and we enforced the collective agreement. The Pawley government appointed one CUPE and one IBEW member to the Hydro Board – a first! We had a voice in the boardroom for the first time.”***

Jonny Maria (CUPE 998 executive) on what the labour movement means to him:

***“To me, union membership is about so much more than simply paying dues, wearing a CUPE pin, or getting a free coffee mug. It’s truly about being part of a movement that fights to improve the lives of all working people, a movement that has spanned generations, 60 years for us at Local 998 to be exact. Being an active member has unlocked opportunities I never thought were possible for someone like me, and it can for you as well. Our solidarity is our power! Here’s to another 60 years of fighting fiercely for the working class at Manitoba Hydro, Efficiency Manitoba, and across the entire labour movement.”***



# KEEP HYDRO PUBLIC

CUPE998

## Public Ownership and Protecting Public Services

CUPE Local 998 has long recognized the importance of strong public services and public ownership. Manitoba Hydro is more than a utility; it is one of Manitoba's most valuable public assets and a key contributor to the province's economic prosperity.

Whether advocating against privatization to Keep Hydro Public, addressing concerns related to contracting out, or supporting investments in public infrastructure, Local 998 has consistently worked to protect services that benefit all Manitobans.

## Looking Toward the Future

As Local 998 celebrates sixty years of success, the workplace continues to evolve.

Issues such as workforce renewal, succession planning, recruitment and retention, remote work, artificial intelligence, mental health, workplace flexibility, and the transition to a more sustainable energy future will continue to shape the conversations of tomorrow.

Just as previous generations of members faced new challenges and opportunities, today's members will help define the future of work while protecting the rights and benefits that have been built over six decades.

# Congratulations from the Government of Manitoba

As CUPE Local 998 celebrates sixty years of service and advocacy on behalf of Manitoba workers, we are honoured to receive recognition from the Government of Manitoba.

**Honourable Adrien Sala, Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Public Service, and the Public Utilities Board, shared the following message:**

***“Congratulations to CUPE Local 998 on your 60th anniversary. For six decades, your members have played a vital role in powering Manitoba and supporting strong communities. Thank you for your dedication, hard work, and continued commitment to Manitobans.”***

**Honourable Adrien Sala**

*Minister of Finance*

*Minister responsible for Manitoba Hydro, Manitoba Public Service, and Public Utilities Board*

*Government of Manitoba*

## Celebrating 60 Years of Solidarity

The accomplishments of CUPE Local 998 over the past sixty years are a testament to the power of solidarity, collective action, and member engagement. Every improvement secured through bargaining, every grievance resolved, every workplace issue addressed, and every advancement achieved has been made possible because members stood together.

While much has changed since 1966, the values that built Local 998 remain unchanged. Respect, fairness, solidarity, and a commitment to improving the lives of working people continue to guide the union's work today.

As we celebrate this important milestone 60 years of CUPE Local 998, we honour the members, stewards, executive members, and activists who built this union and continue to move it forward. Their commitment and solidarity have shaped our past and continue to guide our future, we honour the generations of members who built our union, recognize those who continue to strengthen it today, and look forward with confidence to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

Together, CUPE Local 998 will continue advocating for members, protecting public services, and building a stronger future for generations to come.

# Message from the National President

July 6, 2026

Sisters, Brothers, and Friends:

On behalf of our National Executive Board and CUPE's more than 800,000 members across the country, I am pleased to congratulate CUPE Local 998 on reaching an important milestone, your 60th anniversary.

Today, you represent more than 800 dedicated members who, day in and day out, help deliver the reliable public energy services that Manitobans depend on. For six decades, CUPE Local 998 has worked tirelessly to improve wages, benefits, job security, and working conditions for your members, while standing firmly in defence of public services and public power.

Throughout your history, your local has faced challenges and celebrated many hard-fought victories, always guided by committed trade unionists who never wavered in the fight for fairness, dignity, and solidarity in the workplace.

CUPE Local 998 not only advocates for its members, but also plays an important role in strengthening communities across Manitoba through your dedication, and commitment to keeping vital public services strong, accessible, and publicly delivered.

On this special occasion, I encourage all members of CUPE Local 998 to take pride in and celebrate the many accomplishments achieved over the past 60 years. I wish you many more years of solidarity and success as you continue advocating for workers and defending quality public services for future generations.

In solidarity,



**MARK HANCOCK**  
*National President*

