



Standing strong with the people of Lytton p.2 • Protrans bargaining report p.4 • Life memberships p.8 • Learning how to navigate the WorkSafeBC claims process p.12



## Bringing your concerns forward to government

On July 12, 2021, we had the opportunity to meet with the Honourable Rob Fleming, Minister of Transportation & Infrastructure along with DM Kaye Krishna and ADMs Kevin Richter and Ed Miska to discuss priority issues for members in the ministry. Below are the three items we raised in the meeting and what actions we asked government to take.

### Enforcement of highway maintenance standards

Highway maintenance contracts in B.C. cost more than \$430 million annually and are projected to increase each year. Companies

bid on contracts through an RFP process that includes an “upset value” that considers the cost of enhanced standards and specifications such as improved response times to winter storms, tighter timelines for snow removal, and faster repair of potholes. Those enhanced maintenance standards are funded, at least in part, by cost savings for government that have been negotiated through the collective bargaining process. However, our members in highway maintenance are making it clear that they have not seen improvements on the ground

to indicate that the money negotiated is going to its intended purpose. The failure to enforce maintenance standards also poses significant risks to the safety of workers, road users and those traveling to remote communities.

➡ The BCGEU requested that government commit to monitoring and enforcing highway maintenance standards, including increasing dedicated staff and resources.

### Long-term impact of contracting out on auxiliary workforce

There is a long history of contracting-out or sub-contracting by highway maintenance contractors. This is often done in conjunction with later recalls and earlier layoffs for auxiliary employees. The union’s position is that the rationale for contracting-out no longer exists. Yet, the practice has expanded in recent years because contractors use it as a way to increase their short-term financial gains irrespective of the negative long-term impacts on recruitment and retention. For example, auxiliary positions have been a common entry point for workers in the sector and with less auxiliary work available,

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qualified workers will look elsewhere for employment. The ultimate result will be a dwindling employment pool for this important work.

➡ The BCGEU requested a partnership with the ministry to explore ways to address the short- and long-term impacts of contracting out or sub-contracting for workers and the sector.

### Retention issues

Highway maintenance workers were direct government employees until 1988 when their positions were privatized by the Vander Zalm government. Thanks to a successorship agreement negotiated by the BCGEU, most of these workers retained their wages, benefits, and union membership in the transition.

Recruitment and retention issues continue to plague most industries including the highway maintenance sector. Our members care about the highways in B.C. and the safety of the people and businesses that use our highways. It is a passion that runs deep and we need to preserve that passion for the next generation of members that will continue this work in the future.

➡ The BCGEU will continue discussions with the ministry about how to improve these issues in the sector.

At this meeting, we felt confident that government heard and understood members' concerns. We highlighted the need for the ministry to put more resources into inspections, and for the province to take the impacts of climate change into account

when planning spending on infrastructure and setting safety standards. This includes extreme winter weather but also extreme summer weather like heat waves that damage asphalt, or heavy rains that create hydroplaning hazards.

The minister closed the meeting by asking us to pass on his gratitude to our members for their commitment & professionalism in keeping people safe and products moving throughout the pandemic. We will continue to have dialogue with the ministry on these important issues and will keep you informed of the progress.

*In solidarity,  
Rory Smith  
VP Operational Services*

## STANDING STRONG WITH THE PEOPLE OF LYTTON, B.C.

After recording Canada's highest ever temperature (49.6 C) on June 29, 2021, the village of Lytton, B.C. was consumed by flames the following day — forcing its 250 residents to flee. Within hours, the fire destroyed most homes and structures in the village.

The fire spread so quickly there was no time for an evacuation alert. When former component 10 member Jeff Chapman was preparing for a late afternoon barbecue with his parents, they saw smoke and

flames approaching and had little time to react. "There was nothing we could do," he told media. "It came in so fast, we had nowhere to go." Sadly, his parents died in the fire and our deepest condolences go out to Jeff for his loss.

Jeff worked for VSA Highway Maintenance Ltd. (now Yellowhead Road and Bridge) where a number of component 10 members living in Lytton work now. They maintain the roads, bridges and the ferry that crosses the Fraser River.

"I can't help but think of my co-workers...an although Jeff no longer works with us, I think of him among them," said Michelle McKenna Feltren, Local 1005. "I wonder if I would have the strength to face the long days, months and probably years ahead. My prayers and thoughts are just one of many. But on behalf of component 10 they are with my co-workers and all the people of Lytton at this devastating time."

In the hours and days following the fire, support from British Columbians far and wide poured in, including from the BCGEU.

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THE CANADIAN PRESS/Darryl Dyck

After the executive committee approved \$5,000 in relief funds, BCGEU staff coordinated and dropped off truckloads of donations including food, water and other essential supplies.

Members in the BC Wildfire Service have also been working tirelessly around the clock to contain the Lytton fire. While there is little left, some animals miraculously survived the blaze. Firefighters found a dog, seven puppies, alpacas and sheep that one couple was forced to leave behind as they fled. The couple was relieved to hear the animals were safe and given food and water by crew members.

For highway workers, all regular work is put on hold when wildfires occur. We are re-directed to stand on 24 hour-a-day roadblocks, direct people on evacuation routes, assist first responders when needed, and support local residents in any way we can. The damage to infrastructure can also be significant as we saw after the Pressy Lake and the Elephant Hill fire in 2017. Once again highway workers will get to work inspecting and fixing damaged roads and bridges caused by the Lytton fire.

Once the smoke clears and the evacuation order is lifted, the people of Lytton will have little to go back to. There are a few homes left standing, but they have no hospital, police station, grocery store or gas station. They lost the Chinese History Museum and precious mementos of their past that can never be replaced. But if the support and solidarity from surrounding communities is any indication, they won't have

to walk the road ahead alone. We'll work together to help them rebuild.

## **LEARNING ABOUT THE ARBITRATION PROCESS AT WINTER SCHOOL**

This February I was given the opportunity to attend the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) Winter School. The Canadian Labour Congress holds week-long in-depth courses on a variety of subjects that are of interest to union activists. Though normally held at Harrison Hot Springs, this year it was done through Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

I took a course on arbitration because as a shop steward, I feel that having a better understanding of how the processes available to us work is key to our success as activists.

The course was facilitated by two practicing labour lawyers. I was very impressed by the breadth of their knowledge on the subject, and I felt that even through Zoom, they were able to offer very engaging, high-paced instruction.

Understanding arbitration is of great importance to activists as it is ultimately where the buck stops. Settling grievances is a cornerstone of a union member's rights. It is their opportunity to right what they see as wrong.

Through lectures, personal anecdotes and a mock-arbitration with a real arbitrator, we were able to see the step-by-step process of not only the arbitration itself, but more importantly how to prepare for one. The

facilitator's experience in the field was made evident by the valuable insight they were able to provide. Two examples of this are the importance of picking the right arbitrator and how to independently research and find past law that may be pertinent to your case.

As union activists we are both bound and held up by the processes put in place to create fair and equitable work environments. However, these processes often go underutilized. More than anything, the CLC Winter School allowed for me to learn just how one of these processes can work for members when done correctly.

Many members that I took the course with had been to previous Winter Schools. They spoke very well of these events which pre-pandemic were held in-person but personally, I didn't mind doing it on Zoom. I have a busy personal life and I appreciated being able to focus on the material then jump right back into family life at the end of the day.

Overall it was a great experience and I am very glad that Component 10 gave me the opportunity to attend.

*By Brendan Borba, Local 1004*

On the BCGEU Member Portal you can easily find your collective agreement, take advantage of the store discount program, or get news and updates.



### **NOT SIGNED UP YET?**

Visit [my.bcgau.ca/signup](https://my.bcgau.ca/signup) to join today!



## **PROTRANS BC PANDEMIC BARGAINING REPORT**

The BCGEU bargaining committee at Protrans BC gave the employer (SNC Lavalin) notice to bargain on October 31, 2019. (The collective agreement was expiring on December 31st, 2019). After consulting with the members and going through the existing collective agreement for necessary language changes, we tabled our non-monetary proposals at the beginning of February 2020. This was all before COVID-19 was really an issue.

A month later in mid-March we had to pause bargaining due to COVID-19 and the public health restrictions put in place. At that time, as a public transit entity, Protrans BC was classified as an essential service, both provincially and federally.

SNC Lavalin sent out a notice at the end of March asking all employees for a voluntary cut in pay of 10 per cent for three months, even though the provincial government was looking into “danger pay” wage increases for essential service workers at that time. A week after that, a notice was sent out that the 10 per cent cut in pay was not voluntary. After conference calls and discussions with Gary Bennett, Rory Smith and Kari Michaels, SNC Lavalin backed down from their stance for their unionized employees. The excluded non-management employees took the 10 per cent cut in pay for three months, along with the managers.



In April the employer gave the BCGEU notice that because Translink was demanding service reductions, Protrans BC would begin layoff notices on May 8. They planned on laying off 44 of the 188 BCGEU members at Protrans BC. The layoff notice was then rescinded on May 7 when Translink was able to secure funding from the federal and provincial governments.

The bargaining committee was back in bargaining with the employer at the beginning of July with social distancing and mask protocols in place. We bargained for seven days in July before breaking off again for summer vacation.

We tabled the monetary proposals at the end of September 2020 and, unfortunately, reached an impasse on October 21st, 2020.

The Protrans BC bargaining committee went to the membership asking for a strike vote based on three basic needs: wage parity with Skytrain and a 1.3 per cent tech increase that hadn't been honoured in a prior “me too” clause in 2017; a collective agreement term of two years (as our last CA had been a 6-year term and contributed to the wage disparity between us and Skytrain); and an increase in our sick leave from 48 hours to unlimited sick pay.

We had the strike vote in November 2020 and the results were 97.6 per cent in favour of a strike.

Protrans BC (SNC Lavalin) applied for mediation at the BC Labour Board and Trevor Sones was appointed as our mediator. The bargaining committee caucused in November and December trying to prepare and narrow down our final proposals prior to the mediation, which was delayed until mid-January 2021.

We met with the mediator and the employer via Zoom for about seven days in those two weeks before serving 72-hour strike notice on Friday Jan 29th. At the same time the staff reps and I started the process of appointing picket captains, strike training, determining picket line locations, schedules etc. (all to be set up on the Monday, if necessary).

We continued with long mediation days over that weekend. Rory Smith met with our picket captains outside of the gates at the OMC (Operations and Maintenance Centre) in Richmond on the Monday as we were all prepared to walk out at 4:00 p.m. We continued with mediation on the Monday. The employer, upon seeing the picket captains and a porta-potty arrive, must have realized how serious we were because they actually

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started to negotiate much more seriously. We sent the picket captains home as we continued talks late into the evening. The bargaining committee bargained until almost 3:00 a.m. and fatigue caused some poor decisions and short tempers in the group so we went home to get some sleep. We came back on Tuesday, February 2nd and managed to reach a tentative agreement. We had bargained for 36 days in total this round.

We had the ratification meetings on Friday, February 12th and the electronic voting result came in on Sunday, February 14th at 7:00 p.m. – 60.4 per cent in favour, 39.6 per cent against.

Our new collective agreement contains some non-monetary language gains, an increase in some of our benefits like paramedical increases but we accepted a four-year agreement (January 1, 2020 to December 31, 2023). We bargained a general wage increase of 3.5, 3, 3 and 3.5 per cent over the 4-year term and there is also a tech increase of 1

per cent more for the engineering group, effective on the date of ratification. We increased our sick time from 48 hours to 69 hours and we managed to get “pandemic special leave” language in the collective agreement, which allows for four days of paid leave for each occurrence which is pandemic related, such as going for testing or awaiting test results. You also receive full pay for any amount of self-isolation time that public health has directed, if you have been in close contact with someone from work with a positive test result. This language is not perfect, but we can discuss any changes in the MOA by mutual agreement of the parties.

All in all we got a good collective agreement, well fought by the Protrans BC bargaining committee, especially during a pandemic.



(Because our Canada Line ridership went from moving approximately 150,000 people per day to 50,000 people per day and because the proposed Translink expansion plans have been delayed due to pandemic influences, we were unable to avoid layoffs completely. We had one layoff of a member in December 2020 and two members laid off this spring. These grievances are being heard at arbitration in July 2021. We hope to have these members back at work as soon as possible.)

*Lana Vincent  
Chairperson Local 1003*



Check out this link for great savings on just about everything for BCGEU members

<https://my.bcgeu.ca/edge>



### Alexis Creek worksite

Left to right: Deanne Case, Shayne Gauley, Morgan Haines, Adele Gains and Clayton Stump



## **FOUR REASONS YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER VOLUNTARY CONTRIBUTIONS TO YOUR BCTBPP**

During a recent discussion with a member, I discovered he was unaware that the BC Target Benefit Pension Plan (BCTBPP) is set up to allow for voluntary contributions. Members can make voluntary contributions to the plan provided that their total contributions to all of their tax-deferred retirement plans, including RRSPs, do not exceed the RRSP contribution limit.

For many the ability to contribute extra money may not be an option at this time. But for others getting closer to retirement, especially if your disposable income has increased slightly, a voluntary contribution may be an option worth considering.

Here are four points to consider if you're enrolled in the BCTBPP:

### **1: Flexibility**

When you decide to set up a voluntary contribution amount, you have absolute control over the amount and frequency of the deposits. You can also increase or decrease the amount or temporarily cease to contribute your voluntary amount without accruing any penalties or additional costs. For example, you may decide to set up an automatic voluntary amount of \$100 per month in January. If you have an emergency and need extra money in April, you may decide to decrease or cease your



contribution. Later, once you have recovered financially, you can start it up again.

### **2: Improved pension savings**

The additional contribution you make to your retirement fund will improve your pension savings and increase your monthly pension at retirement. This is extremely beneficial to you because it may allow you to be more financially independent later in life and maintain the standard of living you might have become accustomed to. You can enjoy your retirement to the fullest.

### **3: Increased tax benefits**

By increasing your contribution to your retirement fund, you will be able to take advantage of the fact that if your employer remits voluntary contributions to the plan at your request, there is no tax deducted on that contribution amount. This increases your pension contributions and decreases the total taxes you pay on your income. The more you put in, the more you get out.

### **4: It's more cost effective**

If you were to set up a private retirement fund separate from your BCTBPP, and make additional contributions to the new private fund, you would have to pay a fee for the management and

administration of the new fund. However, paying a voluntary contribution to your existing retirement fund won't cost you more in administrative fees or set-up costs because your BCTBPP retirement fund is already set-up. So, with one plan that is actively managed by a board of trustees you are maximizing fee costs with the flexibility to withdraw your voluntary contributed amount after tax at retirement time if desired.

These are some of the points worth considering when thinking about the income we would like to receive when we retire. Let this also be a reminder of the importance of understanding your benefits and allowances so you can take full advantage. Also make sure you are aware of the percentage that your employer should be remitting on your behalf to your pension fund, and to report any shortfalls.

There are many decisions we make throughout our careers but few are as meaningful or consequential in the longer term as managing our pensions. Stay informed and always seek professional advice when making retirement decisions.

*In solidarity,  
John Cantlon*

## RETIREMENTS

### Dave Boughton

Local 1009



In 2000, I was hired as a mobile mechanic with Emcon Services and was tasked with the support of the western end of Service Area 9, including Beaverdell, Rock Creek, and Midway from the shop in Grand Forks.

This was in the very early days of ICBC's campaign to introduce pre-wetting of winter abrasives. I was asked to familiarize myself with the computerized spreader controls that were in use at the time, namely Compuspread's CS-230.

The first winter was a steep learning curve but soon I was able to help train others in the

process of calibration and set-up of these systems. Along with learning the intricacies of our fleet of equipment this was a daunting task for even a seasoned technician.

It was my great pleasure to be invited to Merritt in 2015 to train a new crew in the building of six new units for the Alaska Highway contract. I've also had the opportunity to help train several apprentices over the years and have noticed a recent resurgence of interest from younger people in this industry.

It is with pride that I supported the travelling public in my position as a technical journeyman over the years. Coming from Saskatchewan, I was fascinated with the engineering that went into the building of the roads in B.C. I love driving them! Working in this sector was my way of paying it forward.

I truly hope the people of this province will come to fully appreciate what they have, and vote to finally maintain it properly. All the very best for the future,

and you always have my support.

*Dave Boughton, Local 1009*

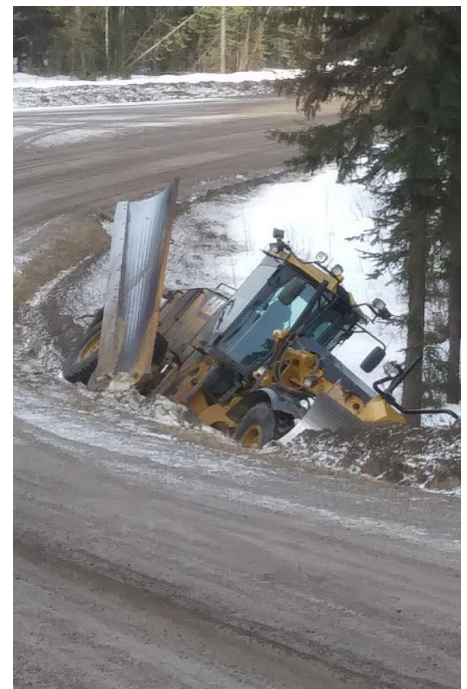
### Dennis Bojczuk

Local 1004

Dennis Bojczuk worked 41 years



as a regular employee for the Ministry of Transportation prior to privatization, Gateway Highway maintenance, YRB and then EAM. Dennis was a mechanic in Mission, Abbotsford and Rosedale shop, he was easy going and was truly a master mechanic in every sense of the trade. He enjoyed working on any problem that came his way and was always there to help and support his co-workers.



Winter season is over

## OUR UNION HAS A NEW NAME

At BCGEU's June convention, delegates voted to change our union's name to the B.C. General Employees' Union.

The new name reflects our union's growing diversity and also addresses an issue that has been raised by BCGEU members, our partners in Indigenous communities and elsewhere in the labour and social justice movement: The term "government" has negative connotations for some Indigenous people and communities and our work towards true reconciliation should focus on taking concrete action to decolonize our union. This name change does that.

It will take some time to update our union's materials to reflect our new name, and we appreciate your patience as our staff works through this process.



OUR  
**RIGHTS**OUR  
**VOICE**OUR  
**UNION****COMPONENT 10****LIFE MEMBERSHIP & HONOUR ROLL RECIPIENTS**

Life membership in the B.C. General Employees' Union signifies a position of distinction and respect. **It's the highest honour our union grants to activists.**

At the 51st Constitutional Convention, our union proudly bestowed life membership on the following outstanding activists in component 10.

**Scott Bumphrey, Local 1001**

**BECAUSE** Scott was on two local bargaining committees;

**BECAUSE** Scott was on one provincial main table;

**BECAUSE** Scott was on the local executive for nine years; and

**BECAUSE** Scott was a shop steward, 1996-2018.

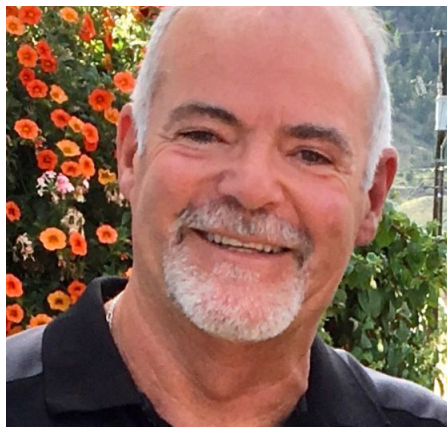
**Reginald (Reg) Dyer, Local 1002**

**BECAUSE** Reg was on three local bargaining committees;

**BECAUSE** Reg was on one provincial main table;

**BECAUSE** Reg was on the local executive (nine years); and

**BECAUSE** Reg was a shop steward, 1997-2016.

**Fred Street, Local 1005**

**BECAUSE** Fred was on four local bargaining committees;

**BECAUSE** Fred was on the local executive for 15 years; and

**BECAUSE** Fred was a shop steward, 1998-2014.

**Wayne Yasinowski, Local 1006**

**BECAUSE** Wayne was on at least four bargaining committees;

**BECAUSE** Wayne was on the local executive for over 10 years;

**BECAUSE** Wayne was a shop steward for over 25 years; and

**BECAUSE** Wayne has held membership in the BCGEU for over 40 years.

**Edward Michael (Mike) Turley, Local 1007**

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**BECAUSE** Mike held membership in the BCGEU for at least 10 years;

**BECAUSE** Mike served on a constitutional, provincial executive or negotiating committee of the union; and

**BECAUSE** Mike held office on the provincial executive, the Component executive or local executive for at least two terms.

### Michael Nuyens, Local 1007



**BECAUSE** Mike was on the local bargaining committee, 1989-2014;

**BECAUSE** Mike sat on two provincial main tables;

**BECAUSE** Mike was a shop steward, 1986-2014;

**BECAUSE** Mike was on the provincial executive, 1998-2014; and

**BECAUSE** Mike was an executive vice-president, 2014-2017.

### Dave Maki, Local 1008



**BECAUSE** Dave held membership in the BCGEU for at least 10 years;

**BECAUSE** Dave served on five local bargaining committees, two provincial main tables and one term as provincial bargaining chair;

**BECAUSE** Dave served on the local executive for six years; and

**BECAUSE** Dave was a shop steward, 1979-2018.

### Joe Warshawsky, Local 1008



**BECAUSE** Joe held membership in the BCGEU for at least 10 years;

**BECAUSE** Joe served on a constitutional, provincial executive or negotiating committee of the union; and

**BECAUSE** Joe held office on the provincial executive, the Component executive or local executive for at least two terms.

### Kevin Staneland, Local 1008

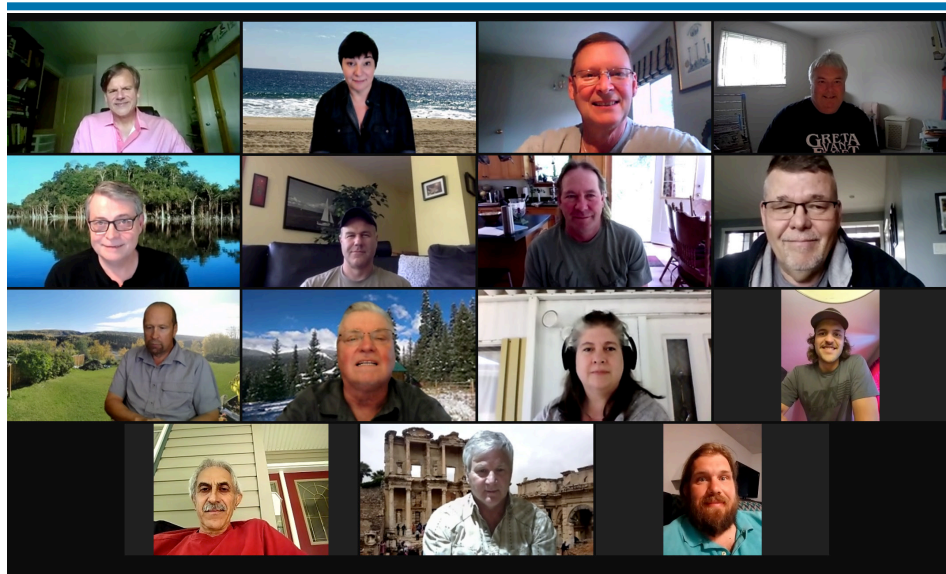


**BECAUSE** Kevin held membership in the BCGEU for at least 10 years;

**BECAUSE** Kevin served on a constitutional, provincial executive or negotiating committee of the union;

**BECAUSE** Kevin has been a delegate to the union's constitutional convention for at least three occasions; and

**BECAUSE** Kevin held office on the provincial executive, the Component executive or local executive for at least two terms.



BCGEU 2021 Convention component 10 caucus

## Bob Cristofanetti, Local 1009



**BECAUSE** Bob was on six local bargaining committees;

**BECAUSE** Bob was on one provincial main table;

**BECAUSE** Bob served 12 years on the local executive; and

**BECAUSE** Bob was a shop steward, 1979-2018.

## Michael Prystae, Local 1009



**BECAUSE** Mike was at convention three times;

**BECAUSE** Mike was local chair three times;

**BECAUSE** Mike was component secretary two times;

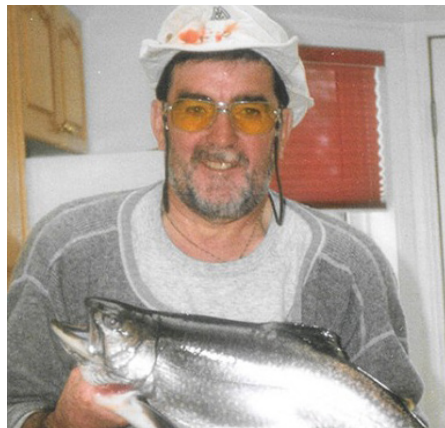
**BECAUSE** Mike was cross component committee chair two times; and

**BECAUSE** Mike was a shop steward, 1987-2012.

# IN MEMORIAM

With our deepest condolences to their families and co-workers, we say goodbye to these members who passed away in 2020/2021.

## Armond Russell Local 1012



Armond Russell passed at the age of 79 after a short battle with cancer which ended peacefully with his family by his side on November 13th, 2020.

Armond worked out of the Houston yard from 1990 to 2006, as a machine operator.

Armond loved camping, fishing, hunting and everything the great outdoors had to offer. He continued to enjoy fishing after retiring to Merritt seven years ago.

## Joseph (Joe) Chapman Local 1002



Joe passed away on February 22, 2021, after a battle with cancer. Joe took pride in his job at Mainroads and enjoyed joking around with the guys at work. He will be missed by all.

## Rick Devlin Local 1008



Rick passed suddenly on March 11, 2021, at the age of 67 years. He was born in Revelstoke and lived here his entire life. He loved Revelstoke and the mountain life it has to offer. Rick also loved work and he leaves work mates at Downie Street Sawmills, Parks Canada, and various highway maintenance contractors.

He had many retirement projects on the go and above all, cherished his home, family, and many good friends. He will be missed.

**Tell us what you think.**



Ministry of  
Transportation  
and Infrastructure

The Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure has launched its 2021 Customer Satisfaction Survey to gather feedback from people on transportation infrastructure and related services.

The survey is in its 17th year and is open for comments until Aug. 31, 2021. It is available online only at: <https://survey.th.gov.bc.ca/transportation2021>



## A THANK YOU FOR ESSENTIAL WORK

Summer is here and it feels great! We may have had a few spring storms to fight but no more night shifts or hours of eye straining winter storms. As last season's burnout lifts, we get to see the sun again and spend dinner time with our family or friends.

Yet you turn on the computer and the road report page is full of complaints! Or you go to the grocery store and overhear how the plows are putting out gravel and not sand. If only *those people* knew what they were doing! When we put out signs, arrow boards and lane closures for our own safety as we do our job, the complaints keep coming about how we're slowing people down and are in their way.

Well, we do care. For 10+ hour shifts we're out there doing our best to keep the roads safe.

Now with winter over, so begins another round of work. We will walk the medians and shoulders

picking up the literal tons of garbage and human waste tossed out of vehicle windows. We'll take away dead animals, tire debris and everything else that ends up on the highway.

We'll clean the rest areas and toilets that are left in the most deplorable conditions. We will sweep sand off the road and mow grass on the medians and shoulders. We'll go ditching, repair cattle guards, grade shoulders and gravel roads. We'll make sure to flush and repair culverts and wash and repair bridges. We'll do all the normal maintenance and fix washed out roads or whatever else Mother Nature throws at us.

When the pandemic hit, it highlighted just how important our work is for the safety of the travelling public. If an outbreak occurred among our workforce, think of all the essential things that wouldn't get done.

Well, *let me* say thank you. Thank you to my crew for all the extra effort you put into a shift. Thank

you to my coworkers and fellow road maintenance workers for making it possible for me to safely drive to get my granddaughter every week. Thank you for going back to work after being hit or forced off the road. Thank you for every family night missed, every Christmas you worked and every shift you kept pushing because you care.

Thank you for showing up at work during a pandemic that could infect you at any time. We will never make everyone happy. But thank you for continuing to keep people safe. And no matter how defeated you feel at times... know that the job you do is not just essential but appreciated and not for the faint of heart.

*By Michelle McKenna Feltren*



## 2021 COLA ADJUSTMENTS

The Annual Highway Adjustment Calculations for 2021 have been finalized. These calculations are based on cost inflation for 2020. The Labour Index adjustment will generate a 4.78% COLA (Cost of Living Allowance) increase for 2021 in all highway maintenance areas with a COLA provision.

In the last year of highway maintenance agreements there  
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Spotted in the Williams Lake union office parking lot. He is missing one side of his rack but pretty nice.

was no COLA increase given to the contractor or membership from the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure. If your contract ended in 2018 there was no COLA for that year and if it ended in 2019 there was no COLA for that year, (except for SA6 as they received their COLA late).

In some of the new collective agreements, we added the last year in with the understanding that if the Ministry of Transportation did not provide a COLA, the members would not be entitled to it, others we had a verbal agreement with the employer. We did not achieve that COLA for the last year of the previous agreements.

1. The first anniversary of your new collective agreement (one year after the start date), the first 4% of the COLA will be a 0% wage increase.
2. Once that 4% is realized the next COLA amounts will be split, 50% of the COLA to wages and 50% of the COLA to rebuild the 2% pension reduction.
3. Once the pension is rebuilt, all the COLA goes towards wages. The COLA increase is the same formula that has produced wage increases since 2005.
4. These provisions were bargained in all highways agreements to-date, those that have not bargained under the successorship agreement yet are SA 11 and SA 20.

In most service areas the COLA increase for 2021 is 4.78 per cent.

In service area 20, they do not receive the COLA in 2021 as that is the year their collective agreement expires.

For more info visit: [www.bcgeu.ca/cola\\_2021](http://www.bcgeu.ca/cola_2021)

## LEARNING HOW TO NAVIGATE THE WORKSAFEBC CLAIMS PROCESS

When I suffered a broken bone due to a workplace injury in 2008, I briefly dealt with WorkSafeBC to set up an accommodation. With my arm in a cast, I was still able to work on modified duties without missing any time and my employer was accommodating.

For others it has not been so smooth. I've heard from co-workers about the struggles they had and continue to have dealing with their WorkSafeBC claims. For that reason, I decided to take the workers' compensation level one course at Winter School so I could better assist them – both in my role as a shop steward and a member at large in the local executive.

Contrary to what many people think, filing a claim and getting approval is not as simple as filling out the correct forms and sending them to WorkSafeBC. In fact, the process can be complicated, take time and your claim can be denied for a variety of reasons.

The course walked us through the overall claims process and helped us to understand the form requirements. It also went into depth about what a decision letter is and how to look up different rules in the Workers Compensation Act used in a decision. We learned how to decipher and break these letters down into plain language that anyone can understand.

This course also covered the purpose behind the medical legal

requests sent to doctors and specialists and why providing specific medical information is required. We discussed how this type of information gathering should be neutral and allow the doctor to come to their own conclusion about an injury.

We also discussed the claim file disclosure and all the information it contains such as documentation, video, photographic or audio evidence.

This course was just the introduction to workers' compensation. We are in no way experts but I now know where to go for information, how to navigate the WorkSafeBC website and where to look up different items in the Workers Compensation Act. Most importantly, this course taught me the importance of reaching out to co-workers struggling with a claim and how to better assist them in navigating the process.

I look forward to attending the level two course at the next Winter School.

*By Vanessa Batres  
Local 1003*

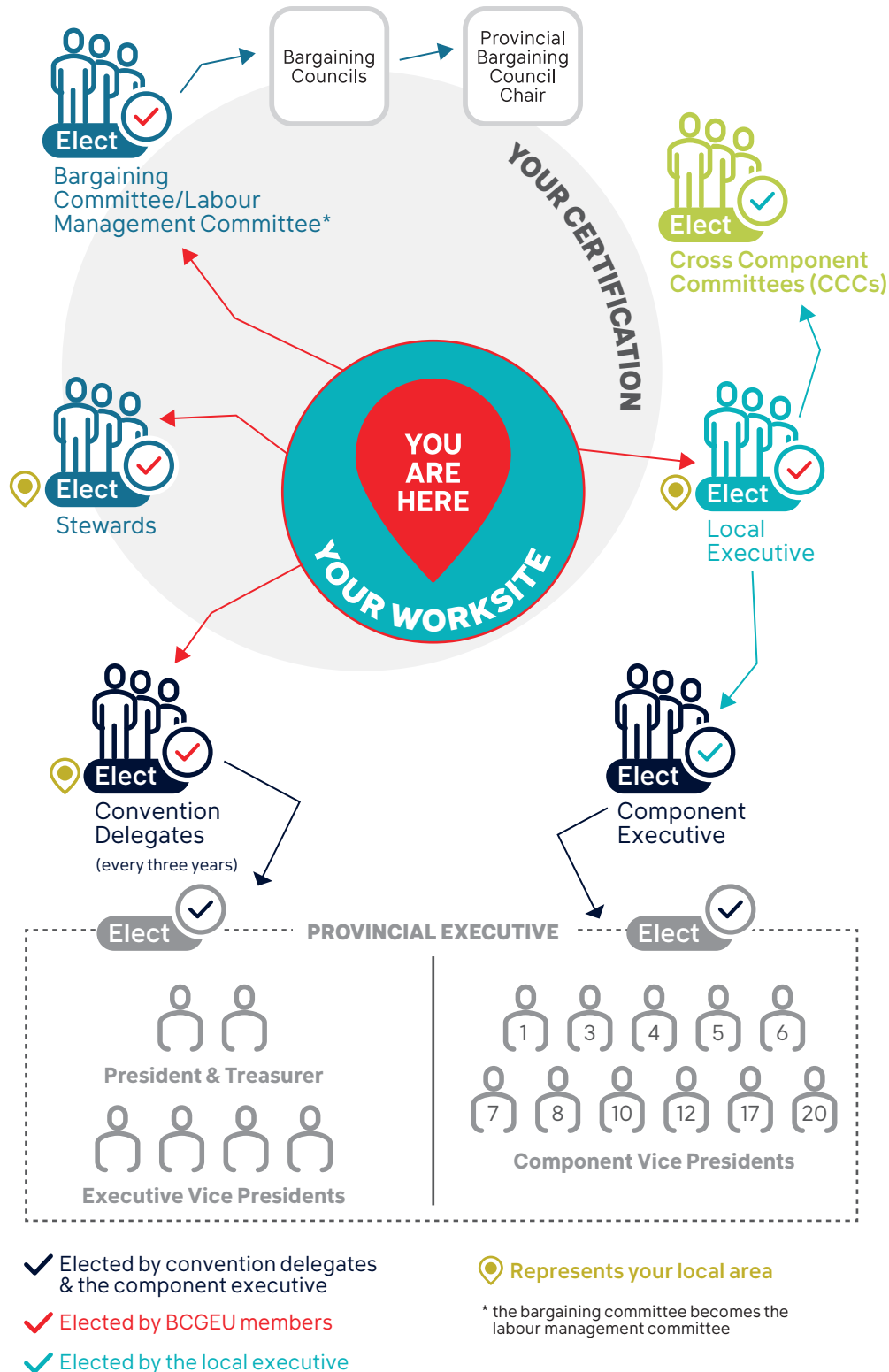
### Scenes from the road Ready for summer?





# Union structure

The diagram below illustrates where you fit into the overall union structure, and how stewards, bargaining councils and committees are elected along with the local executive, the component executive and finally the provincial executive.



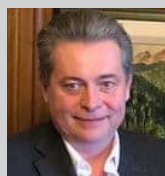
## WORD SEARCH - COMPONENT 10 CERTS

### Pandemic buzzwords

C Q L S M D O G V B G S R Z S V B W W K C Y E I Z  
 E R U Z E N I L N O P U L U S F J M R O F D S O R  
 J E V A G T I J F I U C R X J H H H N C M D S J E  
 Q S A M R A X U R L C I U B T Z C V A Y N V E K E  
 S D E D W A C A W L V N G Q A V E D P U N G N J L  
 I Q Q F K X N Q B A U P A C A N X T Y E F B T D V  
 M R Y U R B E T N M A S K T T B W S V A J B I T E  
 M K A W M J V O I W A W B I S H S A F E S P A C E  
 C Z M T Z A R F E N C S O K E I W U H Y V J L L D  
 J R E E Q O J B S U E N T W S D D X E B N G T Z N  
 W W Q S C H F L S J O K V L N N Q L H J I D R N I  
 B P T R A X N K E V H Z W O E C N V A B Y X A O A  
 P A N D E M I C N S C N C L A I N N R I F B V I L  
 W T J Z X F M F T Y W E O W K Z K O L D C A E S L  
 S V E D I P L H I C S C R I M V M O O Z A O L S L  
 B T N F U R E B A V K D F A T U R I R W L W S E L  
 U Z A I Q B X L L D C L H Q T A Q I B E J O K R A  
 C F F Y T S O A O R L Q Z M N U L P Z Q A T V P M  
 H O X S H O P W S T Q A L O P G N O K A O K P E R  
 S O O Z H O N N D P J B G R R W C J S Q T E L D O  
 H O R C W Q M D N B T U N X B B U F J I X L W R N  
 U D S A O G P E U D E D I D J L E P J D W T G C W  
 W O U T B S G X L M V V H E P J Z O U F A L J D E  
 N W C J K Q T I B Z P B N J U G L Y F L Q V L J N  
 X T D M D T L V R I D H D L R V Z V N S W D B J P

Convention  
 Coronavirus  
 Depression  
 Essential  
 Essential travel  
 Isolation  
 Lockdown  
 Mask  
 New normal  
 No school  
 Online  
 Pandemic  
 Quarantine  
 Safe space  
 Second wave  
 Social distancing  
 Stay home

## COMPONENT 10 EXECUTIVE



**Vice President**  
 Rory Smith  
 (Local 1004)



**1st Vice-Chairperson**  
 Kelly McDonald  
 (Local 1006)



**2nd Vice-Chairperson**  
 Lana Vincent  
 (Local 1003)



**Treasurer**  
 John Cantlon  
 (Local 1010)



**Recording Secretary**  
 Earl Haward  
 (Local 1012)

### Members at large:

Curtis Biech (Local 1011)  
 Shea Morgan (Local 1001)  
 Danny Campbell (Local 1002)  
 Jim Kastrukoff (Local 1009)  
 Randy Sandburg (Local 1008)  
 Michelle McKenna (Local 1005)  
 Cam Able (Local 1007)

For Component 10 Executive contact information go to: <https://www.bcgeu.ca/component-10-executive>

Story ideas and comments for the Comp-Ten Report  
 can be submitted to Kelly McDonald at [1006@bcgeu.ca](mailto:1006@bcgeu.ca)