

ALERT

For all Component 1 members
Feb. 20, 2008

Pay adjustments for Corrections Officers and Deputy Sheriffs rejected, union vows to keep up the fight

BCGEU president George Heyman says the fight will continue to resolve chronic understaffing problems facing Corrections Officers and Deputy Sheriffs after the union's efforts to win a recruitment and retention-based pay adjustment for them were again rebuffed by senior employer representatives at a meeting Feb. 18 in Victoria.

At the meeting Heyman says the union again made a strong case for the adjustment based on:

- measurable staff shortages and recruitment and retention problems;
- loss of Corrections Officers and Deputy Sheriffs to recruitment efforts by federal corrections facilities and police forces where pay is significantly higher;
- significant overtime payouts; and
- increased work pressures and safety concerns caused by widespread overcrowding and understaffing, made worse by heavy reliance on overtime.

Heyman says wage rates for B.C. Corrections Officers are the third lowest in Canada—despite the fact that we have the highest cost of living. Deputy Sheriff pay rates are the lowest for any law enforcement agency in the province.

However, employer representatives said they were managing as is, and that both Solicitor

General John Les and Attorney General Wally Oppal had rejected the pay adjustments.

Earlier this month in response to union demands advanced on your behalf, the Public Service Agency said senior managers from both corrections and sheriff services also echoed the “manage” line.

“That seems to contradict what managers are telling us behind the scenes,” says Heyman. “The message from the frontlines is to encourage us to continue to push for these improvements.”

Heyman says the most recent rejection of the pay adjustments is an unrealistic and unacceptable response.

“That’s why we’ll continue the campaign and bring to the public’s attention every situation where overcrowding and understaffing come to light in our corrections and sheriff systems.”

Ironically, while our efforts were being rebuffed by the Campbell government, the Legislative Assembly of B.C. is recruiting security officers at rates of pay up to \$7,700 more a year than Corrections Officers currently earn, and \$9,700 more than Sheriffs.

In addition, the union raised other equity issues like the public safety designation for Deputy Sheriffs to bring their pension provisions into line with those of corrections officers and other peace officers.



B.C. Government and Service Employees' Union

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