



The Comp-Ten REPORT

FEBRUARY 2005

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Members from the Golden highways crew turned out this fall to take part in the BCGEU's member to member campaign. Jim Manson photo.

In all, we were able to meet with the majority of Component 10 members through the fall phase of the campaign. We did miss a few worksites due to weather and shift schedules, and there were some members who lacked the time to be able to meet with us.

We know how important it is to meet with the membership so we are committed to continue the M2M campaign this year. Please stay informed. Talk with your steward, bargaining chair and local chair. Look for us again in your area in the spring and if you have a computer log on to www.bcgeu.ca and check out the Component 10 web site for more details of the M2M campaign themes this spring.

I want to thank all the activists who committed their time to help make the M2M fly, because without you this project would have crashed and burned. Again thank you for making the commitment to the members who you met with around the province.

Nuyens is Component 10 Chair, and Highways Bargaining Council Chair

BCGEU M2M campaign a success, watch for more this spring

By Mike Nuyens

Six months ago if you were asked what M2M was you would have probably said it's a character from Star Wars. However, today we now know it stands for Member to Member.

It's a process where the membership of Component 10 were able to meet with members of your executive and bargaining council who stepped forward to lead our M2M campaign during an action packed three-week period last fall. You were able to voice your concerns about the cut-backs and problems you have been faced since our contracts were "re-negotiated." Many of you spoke about the impacts of program cuts on your families and communities, and how our lives have been impacted by the current

provincial government.

We listened to you—and in turn you listened to us. You heard what we said about the future and what changes we need to make in May.

We did this because we know how busy everyone is in today's society. And we know members continue to face changing demands in their everyday lives and who struggle to find the time to spend a few minutes at a union meeting.

What's Inside?

We're securing
successorship, page 2

Training wage a bust,
page 3

Benefits, page 4

Power in women's
hands, page 5

Young workers,
page 6

Pensions, page 8

Union presses Ministry to secure key successorship confirmation

THE B.C. MINISTRY OF Transportation wrote to six highways maintenance contractors on January 11 demanding that the contractors fulfill their obligations to the Ministry to provide successorship confirmation pursuant to the maintenance agreement between the Province of B.C. and the highways maintenance contractor.

Letters were sent to the following contractors for the service areas as indicated:

- o Emcon Services Inc., SA 2 and SA 3;
- o HMC Services Inc., SA 18;
- o Caribou Road Services Ltd., SA 21; and
- o Lakes District Maintenance Ltd., SA 24 and SA 28.

The Ministry was acting in response to a demand for action by the Union. After repeated attempts to get these employers to fulfill their obligation to the MoT and to our members, the BCGEU called on the Ministry to press these delinquent employers to fulfill their obligations

under Article 11.1 of the highway maintenance contract with the Province of B.C.

We stated that these employers were attempting to leverage this issue for bargaining on other matters or simply arguing that they were

“The BCGEU called on the ministry to fulfill they’re obligations...our members gave up far too

recognizing the collective agreement and therefore had no obligation to execute the successorship agreement.

The BCGEU stated that “our members gave up far too much to accept this type of extortion or manipulation. Our members and their Union stepped up to the challenge and made significant concessions for one

outcome — confirmed successorship. Anything less was not acceptable.”

The Ministry concluded its Jan. 11 letter to the contractors by stating that the “ministry requires provision of such confirmation by January 28, 2005,” and warning that “failure to provide the above noted confirmation by the due date may cause the Ministry to engage the intervention process to ensure this covenant has been fulfilled.”

Only those maintenance contractors assuming new service areas were required to execute a successorship agreement since they are not signatories to the collective agreement in effect when they took over operations in the new service area.

Mainroad Contracting Ltd., Capilano Highways Services, Yellowhead Road and Bridge Maintenance, VSA Highways and HMC Services (SA 12 only) have completed the required successorship agreement.

NEWS FROM AROUND THE UNION

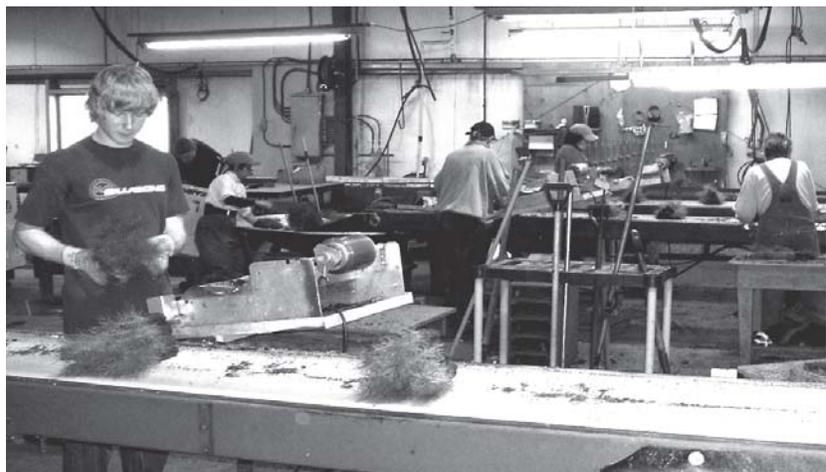
Pacific Regeneration Technologies Update

By Laura Klade Local 1007

August saw the ratification of a new contract for Component 10 members who work for Pacific Regeneration Technologies at various sites in B.C..

Highlights included:

- o A three year contract;
- o Wage increases of 0%, 1%, 2%;
- o The addition of an alternate steward at the Vernon nursery site;
- o Frozen seniority list (no longer calculated on hours); and
- o Expedited arbitration.



PRT workers have ratified a new contract giving them a wage boost and better workplace protections. Mike Prystae photo.

This contract was ratified by 76 per cent margin, and will

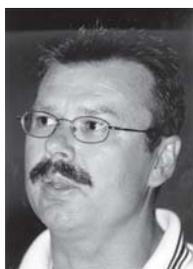
see us bargaining in 2006 along with the rest of Comp 10.

The 80 per cent training rate is a bust

By Mike Nuyens
Highways Bargaining
Council Chair

"Sorry not interested." That simple answer appears to be the growing response from workers who are refusing to accept work in the highways maintenance industry at the 80 per cent training rate.

When this concession was sought by our employer through the successorship negotiations, the Union warned that they would have a hard time getting former and new employees to work for that reduced rate of pay.



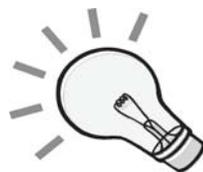
NUYENS

Whether it was for mechanics, welders or machine operators, the training rate would cut entry level wage rates below many of our competing industries such as forestry, oil and gas exploration, construction and more.

The union heard repeated stories during the recent M2M campaign of workers refusing the training rate, and of some employer abandoning the training rate to be able to get qualified workers to accept job offers.

It is clear that the training rate would not work and is not working.

It has provided little if any benefit to our industry and it has certainly not provided any benefit to workers. In 2006 bargaining you can be sure that the union will put this issue on the table for discussion.



FACTS AT A GLANCE

Check the values of service area contracts, old and new

Here's a handy chart showing the value of current maintenance contracts paid by government compared with the figures from the previous contracts by service area.

These values of course will vary because of a number of factors including decommissioning roadways, adding new ones, priority maintenance projects and the added costs of liability insurance.

Service Area	Current Value	Previous Value
01-South Island	\$10,326,383	\$11,626,404
02-Central Island	\$11,367,443	\$12,446,689
03-North Island	\$14,815,028	\$18,329,669
04-Howe Sound	\$9,123,338	\$11,122,509
05-Sunshine Coast	\$3,410,166	\$3,810,646
06-Lower Mainland	\$13,296,668	\$17,904,377
07-Fraser Valley	\$14,222,302	\$15,603,959
08-South Okanagan	\$14,091,245	\$15,306,121
09-Kootenay-Boundary	\$10,672,662	\$12,043,466
10-Central Kootenay	\$16,167,159	\$17,638,952
11-East Kootenay	*	\$13,429,852
12-Selkirk	\$9,740,155	\$10,960,832
13-Okanagan-Shuswap	\$12,348,242	\$14,269,719
14-Nicola	\$12,595,325	\$13,903,048
15-Thompson	\$10,250,000	\$10,781,771
16-South Cariboo	\$12,754,459	\$14,121,153
17-Central Cariboo	\$10,761,717	\$11,846,204
18-North Cariboo	\$10,227,276	\$11,486,751
19-Fort George	\$12,931,625	\$14,479,946
20-Robson	*	\$6,772,034
21-South Peace	\$13,370,870	\$14,548,999
22-North Peace	\$14,091,578	\$13,645,610
23-Nechako	\$7,808,054	\$8,096,657
24-Lakes	\$6,128,000	\$6,642,704
25-Bulkley Nass	\$9,509,105	\$11,152,192
26-Skeena	\$6,577,887	\$7,066,846
27-North Coast	\$3,169,830	\$3,600,686
28-Stikine	\$10,362,581	\$12,252,166

*To be retendered in 2006

BENEFITS ARE YOUR RIGHTS!

By Kelly McDonald
BCGEU Local 1006 Chair

HOW MANY OF US have taken a close look at what's in our benefits package? If you're like most, you probably took a glance at it and then filed it away.

And by doing that, you're doing exactly what the benefit carriers hope you will do.

By not making a claim you lose out on what your union has bargained for you and the insurance carriers count on that to make money.

Did you know that most of our benefit packages include such things as non-prescription stop smoking aids like nicorette, the patch, or zyban? And what about all those prescriptions for drugs. Just because the province has made so many cuts in the government pharmacare program, it doesn't mean you do not qualify for a refund.

Same thing for dental coverage. Some double income families have coverage in two different plans but that doesn't mean that you're not covered in both plans. Most plans do not allow for double dipping but do allow for combined coverage. For example if your dental plan only covers 50 per cent of orthodontics, then your spouse's plan could likely cover the other half.

Other such claims may include hearing aids or glasses (for the whole family when prescribed by a optometrist and up to a yearly maximum), and the ever so popular boot allowance.

Another benefit that is hardly

used is through our Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP). A good many members probably have never utilized this benefit but in most collective agreements it is there. EFAP usually covers emergency help from a variety of professionals like psychiatrists, psychologists, financial planning and many other services. Usually it takes only a phone call made to this confidential service through a 24-hour toll free number to get the ball rolling.

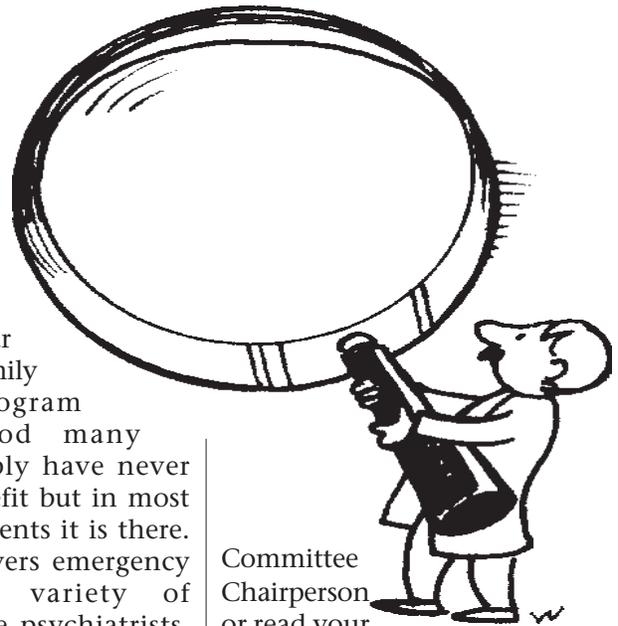
Of all the benefits available, EFAP is probably the most under utilized of them all. It is there for you and your families in time of

“Benefits are important and should not be overlooked because they provide invaluable help”

need and god knows nowadays there is so much pressure put on the family unit so it's important that we have and maintain these type of benefits.

Employers do not like these benefits because they're expensive to provide, and the trend at the negotiating table is that wherever possible employers try to bargain them out of the collective agreements. But do not fall for that, maintain them in your collective agreements because you just never know when you may need this kind of help!

For more info on EFAP ask your steward, your Bargaining



Committee Chairperson or read your collective agreement.

Do not forget that as we get older the requirement for benefits becomes more necessary. Our pensions provide us with some confidence but it is the benefits we enjoy now that will give us peace of mind and dollars in our retirement. don't let them go!

Finally, on the subject of pensions, you likely are entitled to the BCGEU Pension Plan or an RRSP. All of us will have Canada Pension Plan (CPP), Old Age Security (OAS), and perhaps in some extraordinary circumstances access to the Guaranteed Income Supplement

(GIS).

Some of us may have a workers compensation disability pension, or employment insurance illness benefits, or disability benefits from the Canada Pension Plan. And some of us may take solace in knowing that survivor benefits are available as well. For example the Canada Pension Plan makes available up to \$2,500 for funeral expenses.

I have written this article as a reminder to us all that benefits are important and should not be overlooked because they provide invaluable help. Benefits are your rights. Do not lose them!

The power is in our hands!

By Laura Klade

THE LAST FEW MONTHS have been very busy for the BCGEU Provincial Executive's Women's Committee and for women around the province.

In September the B.C. Federation of Labour staged a successful women's conference in Kamloops, where participants included Carol James and Joy MacPhail.

Then in October we celebrated Women's History month. This year marked the 75th anniversary of the *Persons Case*, which helped expand the political rights of Canadian women. In 1927, five Canadian women petitioned our Supreme Court for an interpretation of whether women were *qualified persons* under Section 24 of the *British North America Act (1867)* for appointment to the Canadian Senate. The Supreme Court ruled at the time that the term *qualified persons* did not include women.

The "Famous Five" women who launched the legal challenge included Irene Parlby, Emily Murphy, Nellie McClung, Henrietta Muir Edwards and Louise McKinney. Together they appealed to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council of England which overturned the Supreme Court decision on Oct. 18, 1929. The Council ruled that women were *persons* under Canadian law and therefore eligible to be members of the Senate. This date and ruling were very influential in the selection of October as Women's History Month.

Also in October, BCGEU's Region 4 held a women's conference in Prince George. The theme for this conference was Get Wise, Get

Organized!, to get women registered and out to vote in May.

The Provincial Executive's Women's Committee also met in October. Discussion revolved around Women's History Month and the accomplishments that women have achieved through the years.

Reports from the Component representatives had a common theme: program and services cuts for women, and contract concessions. It was such a contradiction to the Women's History Month where we celebrate our accomplishments.

This meeting was also a time to reflect on the Campbell government and the decades of progress undone in just the last three years. This decline comes in the form of cuts to women's services, cuts to child care, legal aid, women's centers, senior's care, welfare, disability benefits, education and training, victims services, violence in relationship

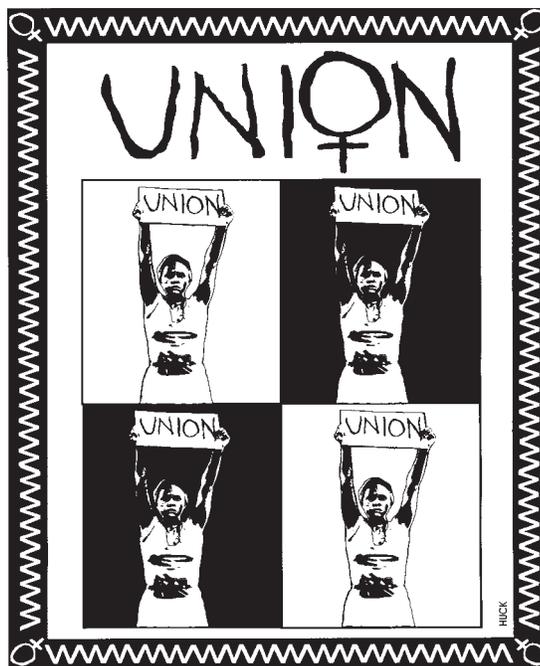
programs, human rights, contracting out, wage roll backs, cuts to benefits and bad working conditions.

We can't afford four more years of the Campbell Liberals. The common theme and emphasis here and now is get out and vote!

If you can help someone exercise their voice, do it. If it means providing a ride, do it! If it means providing childcare for an hour, do it!

Remember the voice of Nellie McClung, one of Canada's famous five, "Get things done and let them howl." The power is in our hands. Vote!

From Local 1007, Laura Klade is Chair of the Component 10 Women's Committee.



Young worker steps up to the plate!

By Angela Will Local 1007
BCGEU Young Worker Representative

My name is Angela Will. I live in Falkland B.C. and work for Pacific Regeneration Technologies (PRT), a forest seedling nursery at the Armstrong division Grandview nursery.

I started working for PRT as a term worker in 2000 after my first year of university classes.

I then worked the spring projects in 2001 and again in 2002, as well as most of 2003. This summer I qualified to become a member in the

BCGEU under the terms of our collective agreement.

Recently, I was approached by the union and asked if I would like to stand as a representative for young workers to the Operational Services Component 10 Executive.

I accepted this new challenge and I hope to become more informed about the functions of the union and our component, and in turn pass that knowledge onto other young workers.

By Paul Lloyd, Local Chair 1001
2nd Vice Chair Component 10

Known as ISO, the International Organization for Standardization was formed in 1946 by delegates from 25 different countries to promote international standardization in all industries globally. They say this will enable businesses to be more competitive, and will provide consumers with better quality, more competitively priced goods.

On the face of it, this sounds like a good thing. However, one party that is rarely mentioned is the employees of these companies who sign on to ISO standards and

“As in everything in life, think about the consequences before you jump on board.”

what it all means for them.

As employees there is nothing wrong with being cautiously optimistic that this standardization will be good for our industry. But let's remember that our employers created their own programs and like any tool it could be used improperly.

In the last century, companies have created other schemes to

ISO

What does it mean for B.C.'s highways maintenance employees?

improve work quality and production. The most common programs are Quality of Working Life (QWL) and Total Quality Management (TQM). These programs included two key concepts:

- o improved quality and production leads to greater customer satisfaction and competitiveness; and
- o if you give employees more variety and responsibility in their jobs they will be more productive.

Historically these programs have had at most a 20 per cent success rate for a couple of reasons. Generally, they create more stress for the employees who are under supervision by the management and also by fellow employees. Also, employees' rights are easily

circumvented by joint labour-management teams which don't involve employee chosen delegates but are normally made up of people hand-picked by the employer. And in most cases management totally ignored the employees' input and just pretended to listen.

Unions disliked these programs because employers were seen to be avoiding proper channels of communication with employees and were more likely to try special agreements with individual workers thereby weakening the union.

Labour relations in Canada and the United States in the last hundred years have been too confrontational and too many of our employers have been on the whole no different.

Hopefully things will improve one day. Until then we should view anything brought forward by our employers and the government as a potential threat until proven different.

We should learn all we can about this new ISO program and identify where it can help our industry and where it will be a tool to further erode our rights and our benefits. As in everything in life, think about the consequences before you jump on board.

Everybody have a good winter. Be safe out there.

Workloads—Remember to be safe... and to be smart

By Dan Baker, Local 1012 Chair

As a volunteer during the recent Member to Member campaign, one thing I found to be common among workers in all BCGEU components was the downloading of work and increasing workloads for our members.

When speaking about highways maintenance, I would like to send a clear message to all our members who feel this increased urgency to complete all work assignments while also trying to cope with quality management systems (QMS) programs, larger time cards, etc.

This message is simple: *stop-take a breath.*

Remember that as professional highway maintenance workers, we have a primary responsibility to operate equipment safely.

When doing road patrols, plowing and sanding speeds should be kept to a *maximum 60 km/hr* to ensure we have time to react to changing conditions and obstacles, and to note deficiencies, temperatures, and other potential hazards faced by the motoring public.

When you factor in proper pre-trip/post trips, loading of material, time cards, truck fueling, blade and shoe changes, truck maintenance, record keeping and other responsibilities, this reduces the actual time for actual highway maintenance.

I would estimate at least 25 per cent of your workday is spent doing related tasks. In an eight hour shift that means you can expect to do six hours of actual maintenance.

When factoring in speed of 60 km/hr, this equals 360 road

kilometers, which if cut in half because of backtracking equals 180 km of road coverage as a ballpark number.

As we all know, it is not unusual to be assigned twice this amount in less than eight hours.

I would encourage all operators to discuss this article with other employees and supervisors.

Let's perform our duties with professionalism and care so that we're providing the best possible service to the motoring public.

There are many good supervisors who understand these important workload issues. But—unfortunately—our employer will often demand more.

It is only possible to do a certain amount properly in a given amount of time. So let's not

exceed this amount, because remember that you could be putting yourselves in a position to be disciplined for making a mistake.

Or worse, you could be personally named in a lawsuit for stretching proper maintenance beyond its ability.

The time has come in this industry for our members to take a leadership role in bringing highways maintenance back to where it should be.

I am counting on you to be an active part of this process. Let us keep our roads safe and forget about unreasonable workloads.

Dan Baker argues that at a safe speed--60kms an hour--equipment operators should patrol, plough or sand only 360 road kms during a normal shift





THE FOUR AMIGOS: Component 10 activists at December's B.C. Federation of Labour convention, from left, Paul Lloyd, Mike Prystae, Jim Manson and Mike Nuyens.

Highlighting workers' role keeping our roads safe

Here are excerpts of a letter to the editor from BCGEU president George Heyman published recently in a 100 Mile House paper.

"Recently your paper has published articles and letters expressing concern about the quality of road maintenance in the region.

As the union representing highway maintenance employees of Interior Roads Ltd., I wanted to offer some food for thought to this discussion.

Because of the geographic realities and weather patterns of the region, road and bridge maintenance has always been difficult - especially winter maintenance.

The region can have significant swings in temperatures which result in road conditions shifting rapidly. Snow patterns and wind are very unpredictable. This makes winter maintenance a new challenge almost hour by hour.

Your readers need to be reminded that funding for road and bridge maintenance was cut last year by the Campbell Liberal government.

Interior Roads Ltd. is being asked to do more with less. This is a harsh reality, but one that Interior Roads and its employees work every day to offset.

Fortunately, Interior Roads has top notch employees. These employees have over 750 combined years of experience responding to the shifting winter road conditions.

These workers and their families drive the same roads as you.

The employees at Interior Roads work hard every day to provide the safest roads possible for everyone."

ALL ABOUT PENSIONS

The question of pension plan eligibility arises from time to time. Of course the terms of eligibility are determined by the various collective agreements. And they are also subject to the legislation and regulations of the Pension Benefits Standards Act (PBSA).

The BCGEU Pension plan is considered a Multi-Employer pension plan which has special features attached to it. BCGEU members hired as regular employees are automatically enrolled. Generally the case is that a member is hired on an auxiliary basis before attaining a regular position.

Therefore members often ask what is the earliest point at which they can enrol in the pension plan. The criteria in most collective agreements is the same as the PBSA requirement, which is the employee must be allowed to participate once a certain period of time and earnings have been achieved. Simply put once the member has worked two consecutive fiscal years (with not less 350 hours worked each year) and has had earnings in excess of 35% of the YMPE they must be allowed to participate in the pension plan at the beginning of the third fiscal year.

The YMPE (Years Maximum Pensionable Earnings) are determined by the federal government. The amounts for the following years are:

2002	\$39,100	(35% = \$13,685)
2003	\$39,900	(35% = \$13,965)
2004	\$40,500	(35% = \$14,175)

Lastly it is important for members to monitor their earnings thresholds and make written application for pension participation directly to their employers. Please note that not all highways maintenance employers are participants in the BCGEU Pension Plan.