

MBSK NVP Report - February 2021

Greetings Members,

It's early in 2021, but we've already seen a great deal of change in the region as a whole. In the general meetings of our Locals, we've seen tenured activists move on and new activists step in to help. To those activists who have served the members for some time; thank you for your dedication and your service, for being willing to learn and to help and for the busy days and long nights. To our new activists; thank you for rising to the occasion, for being willing to learn and grow and for working to support our members and improve their working conditions.

As your National Vice President, I use Local meetings to meet our members and hear their concerns directly in addition to the updates provided by your Local Officers. We've heard concerns from members with health and safety, eServices, training, staffing and leave being the most prominent. Depending on the exact concern, it may be worked on at the Local, Regional or National level in an Occupational Health and Safety or Labour Management Committee or informally with departmental leadership.

My normal work continues both on the Regional and National Occupational Health and Safety Committees for ESDC where we work with the employer to keep our members safe at work. COVID19 and related items dominates these agendas with topics ranging from site fit up to vaccines being discussed in addition to more normal items related to security and site updates. As we emerge from the pandemic and our workplace evolves, we can expect to see new issues on the OHS table.

We continue to work closely with the Canadian Mental Health Association to deliver training specific to representing members with mental health issues. This has been delayed due to the pandemic, but we plan to roll this training out to our activists as soon as it is safe and feasible to do so. In the meantime, we will continue to provide Local Officer training for Locals which require it and are preparing training on virtual mobilization and engagement as well. The latter has grown in importance with the rise of telework in all of our departments has changed the way we communicate and interact with our membership. Additional training around grievance handling and harassment complaints is also being discussed.

2021 can also be described as a convention year. With the PSAC's National Bargaining Conference, Convention of the Canada Labour Congress, the Prairie Region Convention for PSAC and the CEIU National Convention all occurring between April and September of this year, the schedule will be busy. The region will be well represented at each of our conventions.

With gathering restrictions in place throughout Manitoba and Saskatchewan, PSAC's bargaining process looks a little different than previous years. CEIU's members responded to the request for bargaining submissions online. We received over 700 submissions from our members from coast to coast to coast. Manitoba Saskatchewan meanwhile, organized a series of townhalls on bargaining to engage directly with our membership. The project rapidly grew to include all of Western Canada, then the Province of Quebec and finally the first regional bargaining conference Western Canada and Quebec have participated in in

recent memory. Our delegates prioritized the demands obtained from the town halls and the following regional priorities were sent forward to CEIU National:

- Improvement of vacation increments with extra weeks being added at 5 year intervals rather than 8
- The inclusion of National Indigenous People's Day and Family Day as paid statutory holidays
- Providing members with the option of taking monetary compensation for hours of overtime worked or time in lieu

As one would expect, the amount of work to keep our members informed and represented is considerable at the best of times. Pamela Mier-Duthie and Paula Nygaard, our regional staff continue to provide excellent service during these times. Charito Humphreys, our Alternate NVP took the lead role in organizing our town halls while Paula Nygaard, Suzanne Sorensen, Veena Guinness and Ashley Petrin provided the admin support for the bargaining conference and Gina Corbiere handled the interpretation services. It was our staff and elected officers working together which allowed us to organize and run a bargaining conference so quickly.

We're now coming up on a year of the pandemic. We've seen case counts rise and fall and dealt with various safety measures. We've kept working to deliver service to Canadians. We've also gotten positive news regarding vaccines being developed, tested and being administered. It is going to take time. Please do what's needed to keep yourself, your families and your friends safe. Please be kind to one another.

In Solidarity,

Chris Gardiner
National Vice President
CEIU Manitoba Saskatchewan

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