

GMM PRESIDENTS REPORT

FEBRUARY 16, 2021

Covid-19

We continue to lobby employers to restore hero pay but the reality is that with improved numbers and relaxed restrictions it is unlikely that they will do so. Safeway has announced that they are eliminating the “lockdown pay” that began on November 12th and the last payment to Safeway members will be on March 24. This was the last employer that was still paying a bonus.

Our current lobbying efforts are now focused on getting our front-line members on the priority list for vaccinations. We are lobbying the provincial government as well as participating in a National Office initiative across Canada federally.

Our number of members with COVID-19 have steadily dropped since our last meeting with the majority now being fully recovered.

Winnipeg School Division #1 Strike

The Manitoba Labour Board hearing to resolve the issues still in dispute after the strike was held on January 28 and 29. The Board will issue an award by the end of this month that will be a contract that will expire again this fall. This means that we will be right back at the bargaining table with this employer shortly after getting the strike issues resolved.

Stella's Sherbrook Strike

In late January, the Company announced the permanent closure of the Sherbrook location to be effective February 14 or earlier. This makes the 3rd location that we had organized to be closed by Stella's.

The hearing at the Labour Board to resolve all outstanding issues following the strike is scheduled for February 11 and 12. We still plan to go ahead with the hearing in case Stella's reopens under a new name or sells to another owner who opens a restaurant. If this happens, we will have successor rights and our members will have recall rights until December 9, 2021.

Stella's members are being offered career transition services through our Training Centre and we expect the award from the Board to be issued in early March.

Maple Leaf Winnipeg Negotiations

Our 1,500 members working at Maple Leaf in Winnipeg have a new contract. The committee reached a deal late on January 12th and we had a very quick turnaround to a ratification vote that was held in the plant on January 20 and 21.

The deal contains strong wage increases, increases to premium and employer benefit contributions as well as many language improvements. Our members are very happy with their new contract and 85% of them voted in favour of accepting it.

To see all the new provisions, you can go to member resources on our website.

My thanks to the committee that worked very hard and managed to get this done despite the pandemic!

Exceldor Poultry Negotiations

We also reached a deal for our 600 members working at Exceldor Poultry in Blumenort. We aren't releasing any details yet because at the time of the writing of this report the deal had yet to be ratified.

Executive Board

Executive Board Vice-President Darlene Kernot has resigned her position on the Board as she will be leaving Safeway after a career that spanned 6 decades. I want to Thank Darlene for her service on the board over the last three years and for a lifetime of Union activism with UFCW. The Board will meet again in March to determine who Darlene's replacement will be.

CLC Convention

It's now been confirmed that the CLC Convention will be held in a virtual format from June 16th to the 18th this year.

Bea Bruske, our Secretary Treasurer will be running for President and her slate called 'Team Unite' will also be running for Secretary Treasurer and First Vice President.

Bea will be on the campaign trail in April and May and our Director of Operations, Marie Buchan, will be filling in for her. All of our staff wish Bea the best of luck and we know that she will make a great President of the CLC.

Staffing Changes at Local 832

Our longest serving staff member, Sonia Taylor, has announced her retirement effective March 1st of this year. We all congratulate Sonia on her incredible career at UFCW where she was a servicing rep, our Retail Coordinator, the Director of Organizing and, most recently, a full-time negotiator.

Taking Sonia's place starting on February 1st, Joe Carreiro, our current servicing rep for our members working in Northern Manitoba, will take over Sonia's negotiations territory.

Our members in the North will be happy to learn that after a short absence, Mike Howden will once again be assigned to represent the Northern territory also starting February 1st.

Since Mike Howden was working in our organizing department, we are also announcing that we have hired Loreto Gutierrez to work both as our full-time organizer and in a relatively new capacity focusing on member engagement. Loreto started February 1st and will be interviewed live on our town hall meeting February 16th.

Finally, our servicing rep assigned to the Neepawa territory in Westman, Wendy Lundy, has announced that she will be retiring later this spring. We are currently working on her replacement and I will report on our progress at our next General Membership Meeting in May.

As reported by
Jeff Traeger
President
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