

GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING PRESIDENT'S REPORT

May 21, 2024

BRANDON MAPLE LEAF NEGOTIATIONS

This summer, negotiations for our 2,000 members working at the Maple Leaf plant in Brandon will begin. The bargaining committee has been selected and you can see them on our website at ufcw832.com. On April 22nd and 23 the committee came together for a two-day orientation and training session and to review the proposals submitted by our members at the plant in February and March. With the significant increases to minimum wage that have taken place since the last contract was signed, there is much ground to be made up in order to keep Maple Leaf an employer of choice in Brandon. The contract expires on December 31, 2024.

HYLIFE NEGOTIATIONS

Another major pork producing plant, Hylife Foods in Neepawa, is up for negotiations at about the same time as Maple Leaf Brandon. That contract for the 1,800 UFCW members working there expires January 31, 2025 – just a month after Maple Leaf and Secretary Treasurer Marie Buchan will be heading up those negotiations. Plans are already underway to collect proposals from the members and select a bargaining committee so check our negotiations page on our website for more information.

CASHIER CAMPAIGN

Our public campaign to ask shoppers to think twice before using a self-checkout at their grocery store continues to be well received. The campaign is set to run until this December and at various times will include physical ads such as bus benches and bulletin boards, but the main platform will be online ads which have been running since December 15, 2023. Our ad has been selected by the “Shorty Awards” to be a finalist for this year’s award in the “Public Service Announcement” category. The awards will be made at a gala in New York city in the third week of May.

LABOUR LEGISLATION

On Monday May 6, the Government of Manitoba tabled legislation that will help to end strikes more quickly and make it easier for Manitobans to join a union. A ban on replacement workers (anti-scab legislation) will ensure that employers can no longer prolong labour disputes by hiring workers to take the place of those who are on strike. Workers wishing to join a union will now be automatically certified once 50% +1 of the workers in a location sign a union card and there will no longer be a need to conduct a vote once that threshold has been met. This will prevent employers from interfering in workers democratic right to be represented by a union.

WELCOME WEBINAR

Our first Welcome Webinar of 2024 was held on April 24th and gave new UFCW Local 832 members a chance to here from the leadership and staff of the Local and ask any questions they had about their union. It was very successful and our next one is scheduled for October 23rd.

UFCW JOB FAIR

On April 27th, our Training Centre conducted a job fair where 9 employers who contribute to our education fund set up information tables to recruit new employees. Our previous job fair in 2023 saw about 185 people attending, but this year we had approximately 500 people attend throughout the afternoon so it can only be described as an incredible success. Employers are interested in having us hold another job fair in the fall once students return to university and we are looking to make that happen.

DAY OF MOURNING

The Day of Mourning normally falls on April 28th which was a Sunday this year so it was held on Friday April 26th instead. Labour leaders, allies and members of the Government of Manitoba walked from the Union Centre on Broadway to the Worker's Memorial in Memorial Park. Premier Wab Kinew, Kevin Rebeck and the Safe Workers of tomorrow addressed the crowd about the need for greater safety on the job as 22 workers passed away on the job since last year's Day of Mourning.

NDP CONVENTION

The NDP Convention took place at the Fairmont Hotel May 3-5 and was an opportunity for delegates to celebrate the recent election win as well as to hear the direction government plans to take in the future. The event closed at noon so delegates could attend the recognition of Red Dress Day at the Forks on the afternoon of the 5th.

MFL CONVENTION

The MFL Convention took place in Brandon May 9-11 and was attended by 360 activists from 20 different affiliates from all four corners of the province. Delegates heard from great speakers like Premier Wab Kinew, CLC President Bea Bruske and Minister of Labour Malaya Marcellino. Delegates debated more than 75 resolutions that will set the direction and the priorities of the Federation for the next three years. Kevin Rebeck was re-elected as the MFL President and I was re-elected as the MFL Secretary Treasurer – a position I have held since 2012.

STAFFING UPDATES

Since my last report we have hired new full time Union Representatives in Brandon and in Winnipeg. On March 25th, Andy Spence was hired to work out of the Winnipeg office in the industrial territory. Andy brings 8 years of experience working as a representative in the labour movement in Manitoba and is a welcome addition to our team. On April 22nd, Adriana Osegueda was hired to work as a dedicated relief Union Representative in our Brandon Office. Adriana has worked at the local as a translator for two years and has just completed her political science degree from the University of Brandon. UFCW members can meet these two new staff members at our spring and fall telephone town hall General Membership meetings.

As reported by:
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President
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