



The Conciliator

UNIFOR Local594 | Canada

204 Hodsman Road, Regina, SK.
www.unifor594.com

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Past, President & Future

It has been a busy few years at the Co-op Refinery. We have seen many changes within the workplace and the Company's management structure. The changes have been very challenging because we are dealing with different players within this structure. The Unifor workforce may be the only variable that has not changed.

I would say it is our workforce that is one of the few things keeping this company profitable. The constant that is needed in our workplace, is our memberships care factor, the unbelievable work ethic, and ability to safely and competently complete work assignments. I feel that this fact is sometimes lost with the new management structure and they may not understand how valuable our membership is to our Company.

As we move forward, the Executive needs to adapt to properly represent the members of #594. I want to let you know that your Union Executive is working very hard to hold the Company accountable to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, Labour Laws, and Legislations in Saskatchewan.

As everyone is well aware, we are deep in the Bargaining process with the Company. Negotiations are always tough and stressful, and a difficult time to work on repairing Company-Union relations. But we will work through the Bargaining process and we will get back to building the relationships that we need to set the company up for success. There are quite a few new faces in Human Resources. This presents other challenges when dealing with our CBA language and the meaning or intent behind some of the clauses, as new employees to the Company key players lack the interaction and history with our collective agreement. We will have to work together with the new HR people to properly navigate through our agreement to try and solve problems before they become grievances.

The change in organizational structure has caused an influx of management people that lack the privilege of our incredible history of both sides working together to solve problems. The true dedication and engagement that this workforce has, and the pride that you have for your workplace is lost on the newcomers. As a result we have seen grievance numbers soar from 2 or 3 yearly to presently having 37 active grievances. We are working hard to properly represent you in these grievances which has kept our Law Committee very busy. The Law Committee meets on a quarterly basis, but are researching constantly to provide direction to the Union Executive on grievances and potential arbitrations.

"I would say it is our workforce that is one of the few things keeping this company profitable."

• EXECUTIVE

President:

Kevin Bittman

Recording Secretary:

Carla McCrie

Treasurer:

Kaleena Baulin

Negotiating Chairperson:

Dan Josephson

Maintenance V.P.:

Abe Mejia

Process V.P.:

George Brailean

Administration V.P.:

Jamie Wilhelms

PDD V.P.:

Donny Stilborn

Chief Shop Steward:

Richard Exner

Information Officer:

Abe Mejia

Guide:

Terry Young

Sergeant at Arms:

Brandon Klatt

Trustees:

Daryl Schwartz (16)

Amy Wisniewski (17)

Daryl Watch (18)

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• SHOP STEWARDS

Section IA:

Nathan Kraemer

Section IB:

Charles Britner

Section II:

Chad Gettle

Section III:

Curtis Baht

Section IV:

Avery Riche & Travis Parker

Section V:

Chad Thompson

Building Maintenance:

Gary Gruell

MRP:

James Cheeseman

Pipefitters:

Wayne Globisch & Shaun Jenkins

Mechanics:

Derek Kups

Stores:

Brenda Curtis

Electrical:

Les Bonkowski & Jason Kelly

Instrumentation:

Jaret McCloy & Dave Mushynsky

Inspection:

Keith Britton

Fire & Safety:

Daryl Watch

Lab:

Mike Fink & Ray Strueby

Pumpers:

Ryan Dzioba

Decokers:

Jon Javorik

Welders:

Jim Milton

Scaffolders:

Nelson Wagman

Construction:

Mike Pelzer

Boilerhouse:

(vacant)

Insulators:

Kris Atkinson & Luke McGeough

PDD Office:

Susanne Carpenter

PDD Loading:

Dean Warnke

Packing & Blending, Warehouse:

(vacant)

Administration:

Amy Wisniewski

Past, President & Future

The expansions and revamps have seen a small increase in our membership numbers and a change in demographics as well. In a plant where 10 years ago everyone knew everyone, it has now flipped to where that is no longer the case. This has brought our Union unique challenges that our Social committee is working hard to address. Hosting functions to bring people together outside of work to build solidarity is their goal. Our Union Christmas Social is our biggest event and is great way to celebrate together during the holiday season.

We have a Union Orientation that gives our new sisters and brothers background information on the history of our local and what this Union has done in past for its members. We have recently revamped and improved the presentation to better communicate our strengths and values and the benefits of being part of a Union. We are a high quality workforce. Our goal is to try and build a sense of pride in belonging to our Local and that our value is in our performance and conduct in the workplace.

Our Local has always prided itself on being educated to handle it's own challenges, and as much as this is getting increasingly difficult we have continued to educate as many people as would like to learn more about our policies, procedures, laws, and contracts. We routinely run Steward schools for anyone that would like to attend. Giving our members some knowledge and education helps everyone when dealing with issues in the workplace. We are always thinking about succession planning by teaching and educating our future leaders of the Local.

Our Local has overcome plenty of challenges over our strong 74 year history and we will have just as many in the next 74 years. I am confident we can triumph over any adversity we face as long as we maintain our morality, dignity and our sense of right and wrong. We are strong when we stand together to achieve our goals. Through these troubling times we need to remember that you are not alone, and that you have the support of your Union and the 800+ brothers and sisters.

In Solidarity,

Kevin Bittman, President

Just For Laughs



Know Your Union - Union Leave

In order to conduct Union business or to facilitate training, members from our local often require Leave of Absence from their regular duties. Article 15 Section 5(b) of the Collective Agreement outlines exactly how the approval process works with the Company. The clause also states that all relief due to union leave of absence will be paid at straight time.

A few years back, our Executive recognized that high overtime rates negatively impacted the ability of schedulers to find coverage for union relief. In response, the membership passed a motion to adopt a policy, that is outside of the collective agreement, that allows anyone working union relief of eight hours or more, to be eligible for compensation in the way of two-hundred and fifty dollars paid by the Union.

If you work union relief, simply fill out a Unifor expense form with your name, section, and the date you worked union relief and send it via inter-office mail to Kaleena Baulin, our Secretary Treasurer, in the Process Lab. Once the expense form is processed you will receive your cheque through inter-office mail. If you have any questions, ask your Steward.

The Battle Versus Apathy

Apathy is the enemy of all unions and has threatened our existence throughout history. As our demographics change to a younger workforce it is vital that we encourage new faces to get involved and take on a bigger role in the function of our Local. I think we are all guilty of coming up with excuses to avoid giving back to organizations we have benefited from. Hopefully, I can convince you that the benefits of involvement far out way the barriers.

Everyday we find ways to make time for all the things that are important to us. So why wouldn't you want to take an active role in an organization that influences one of the most important things in your life, your job? The Co-op Refinery is a great place to establish your career, and the testament to that is, traditionally, our turnover rates have been very, very low due to the strength of our Union. Not just because we defend the rights of our members, but also because we have negotiated fair compensation for our members in such a way that they don't view the Refinery as a jumping off point to something better. And it all starts with grassroots involvement.


Everyone is always scared to step up, so start small; attend a general meeting with a friend, join one of the committees, or register for an educational seminar or course. No one expects you to jump right to President or lead the Bargaining Team. That level of commitment is not for everyone, but there are other ways to be involved. It's not nearly as intimidating as you may think. It is a great opportunity to learn about other work groups, meet new people, and build camaraderie. I guarantee you'll find it interesting and even a little empowering to learn about the issues.

No individual is ever 'ready' to be a union leader on day one, but the educational opportunities are endless. When you take the high care level of our members and add training and guidance you develop great leaders. But it is a team effort. That injection of new perspective and fresh ideas is integral to the continued success of the local. Being involved in the Union is a wonderful opportunity to learn new skills, feel good about helping others, and also have some fun along the way.

Our local has enjoyed many successes in our proud history due to the combined efforts of those who have volunteered to serve on the executive. This doesn't happen by magic. We have gotten to where we are today due to their commitment to making our workplace the best it can be through countless contributions of time and effort. It takes all of us to succeed.

It feels uplifting to make a difference and be part of our group. There is a sense of achievement, feeling of satisfaction, and pride to be part of the greater whole. I encourage everybody to try becoming involved in whatever way they can. You might find you get back more than what you give.

In solidarity,
Jamie Wilhelms, Admin VP



*“No one can
do everything,
but we can
all do
something.”*

The Right to Collective Bargaining

The 1998 ILO Declaration of Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work affirms the importance of the effective recognition of the right to bargain collectively.

The fundamental Convention covering this right is the Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining Convention, 1949 (No. 98). The MNE Declaration provides detailed guidance on collective bargaining in its section on industrial relations (art. 49-56).

The right of workers to bargain freely with employers is an essential element in freedom of association. Collective bargaining is a voluntary process through which employers and workers discuss and negotiate their relations, in particular terms and conditions of work. It can involve employers directly, or as represented through their organizations; and trade unions or, in their absence, representatives freely designated by the workers.

Collective bargaining can only function effectively if it is conducted freely and in good faith by all parties. This implies:

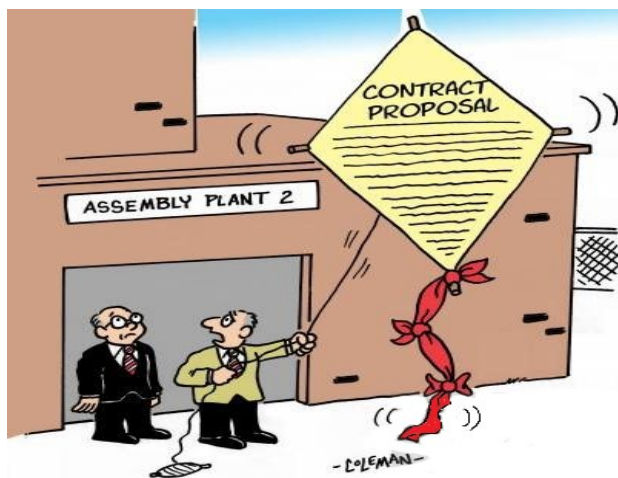
- Making efforts to reach an agreement
- Carrying out genuine and constructive negotiations
- Avoiding unjustified delays
- Respecting the agreements concluded and applying them in good faith, and
- Giving sufficient time for the parties to discuss and settle collective disputes.

Bargaining in good faith aims at reaching mutually acceptable collective agreements. Where agreement is not reached, dispute settlement procedures ranging from conciliation through mediation to arbitration may be used.

The collective bargaining process also covers the phase before actual negotiations - information sharing, consultation, joint assessments - as well as the implementation of collective agreements.

Source: The International Labour Organization, www.ilo.org

Last Laugh



"THE UNION TOLD ME WHAT WE COULD DO WITH OUR CONTRACT PROPOSAL."

Staying Connected

Website. www.unifor594.com

Email. info@unifor594.com

Twitter. @Unifor594

Facebook. Unifor Fiveninefour

General Meetings. Fourth Tuesday of every month at the Union Hall.