



Shipbuilding

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uniforum



A ship goes through a lock along the Welland Canal, where Unifor represents workers guiding ships into place.

Minimum wage hike won't kill jobs

A study by two Unifor economists found there is no consistent connection between higher minimum wages and employment levels in Canada.

The study, done for the Canadian Centre

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Seaway talks go to arbitration

Five Unifor locals averted a strike along the St. Lawrence Seaway by agreeing to send outstanding issues to binding arbitration.

"We have been meeting night and day the past week to reach a deal, and came to the conclusion that arbitration was the best way to resolve remaining

issues," Unifor National Representative Joel Fournier said.

Details of the issues sent to arbitration and the complete contract will be revealed with the decision of the arbitrator. Both sides expect to meet with the arbitrator as soon as possible to resolve this matter.

The 460 members of Unifor along the St. Lawrence Seaway from Niagara to Montreal are in Locals 4212 and 4211 in Niagara and Cornwall,

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Health workers choose Unifor

Unifor welcomes the results of a vote at Earls Court Village Nursing Home in London, Ontario where employees, excluding RNs, voted to be represented by Unifor.

"Unifor proudly represents health care

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#unifor

Here's a selection of tweets about @UniforTheUnion

@Unifor2002

Ramp agents at #PorterAirlines choose #Unifor bit.ly/1xUJOiA via #unifor2002 #canlab #1u #airlines

@rankandfileca

St. Lawrence Seaway strike averted by voluntary arbitration stcatharinesstandard.ca/2014/11/02/sea... #canlab #onpoli #cdnpoli #Unifor

Fortier on youth job panel

Unifor Ontario Regional Director Katha Fortier has joined a new initiative to help alleviate youth unemployment in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area (GTHA).

"Tackling youth unemployment is a top priority for Unifor," Fortier said. "Last month's Good Jobs Summit showed that we will need many such initiatives to create the good jobs our youth deserve."

The initiative, led by CivicAction and NPower Canada, aims to establish free training, paid internships, job placement and mentorship for underserved youth in the GTHA for youths interested in becoming IT professionals. Fortier will be a member of its Champions Council.

The first class of 31 students will receive 15 weeks of technical skills training and life skills training. Students who complete the training will move to a seven-week paid internship, followed by career coaching.

A report from CivicAction in September, Escalator: Jobs for Youth Facing Barriers, estimated that 83,000 – or 1 in 10 – youth in the GTHA are both without a job and not participating in education or training. 

Photo spotlight

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PHOTO BY MARIA TAYLOR

Unifor Local Unifor 112 Executive Board member John Ziegler (Sergeant at Arms) got dressed up for Halloween.



PHOTO BY GAYLE FAIRCHILD

Unifor activists from across Canada took part in the Women Activists course recently in Port Elgin.

No changes expected to shipbuilding contract

Unifor fully expects members at Halifax Shipyard to build six Arctic patrol

vessels (AOPS) as planned. "We have been assured by the company that everything is full speed ahead. Design work on AOPS continues and a contract is expected to be signed in January for the six AOPS vessels and that the build work in the yard will begin in September 2015," said Unifor's Atlantic Regional Director Lana

Payne. "We also fully expect the federal government to live up to its shipbuilding commitments," she said. The decades-long project to replace Canada's Naval Combat ships is projected by the Conference Board of Canada to create about 11,500 direct and indirect jobs in the region. 

Featured Campaign: Nova Scotia Health

Nova Scotia's health care system is undergoing radical change, including the provincial government's decision to move from nine District Health Authorities to one provincial board and one board for the IWK Health Centre in Halifax, and to cut the number of collective agreements to four province-wide bargaining units. Unifor supports a plan for unions to negotiate at one table for each province-wide bargaining unit <http://www.unifor.org/en/take-action/campaigns> 



Nova Scotia health workers rallied for their rights last month.

TO PROMOTE A CAMPAIGN IN YOUR LOCAL OR REGION, CONTACT COMMUNICATIONS@UNIFOR.ORG

UNIFOR COMMUNICATIONS: SARAH BLACKSTOCK, SHANNON DEVINE, KATIE ARNUP, STUART LAIDLAW, IAN BOYKO, SHELLEY BURGOYNE, MARIE-ANDREE L'HEUREUX AND ANNE MARIE VINCENT

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Locals 4319 and 4320 in Montreal and Local 4323 in Iroquois, Ontario.

Unifor had set a strike or lockout deadline for October 31 at 12:15 p.m., but extended the deadline to 5 p.m. on November 3 while negotiations were continuing. The deal averting a strike was reached November 2.

The Seaway announced in April that it had received funding from the federal government to automate the locks along the Seaway, eliminating staff currently working on the locks.

For a closer look at the hands-free lock system, go to: <http://www.unifor.org/en/blog/seaway-automation-a-public-concern>. 

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choose..." on page1

workers who work hard every day to care for us and our families and we're pleased that workers at Earls Court chose to be represented by Unifor," said Unifor National President Jerry Dias.

Workers at Earls Court voted October 22 on which union they wanted to represent them, and chose Unifor.

The Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act (PSLRTA) vote means Unifor will now be the sole bargaining agent for more than 120 workers.

The vote comes almost three weeks after more than 1,400 registered practical nurses and service employees at St. Joseph's Health Centre in London



Health workers are a proud part of Unifor.

voted to be represented by Unifor. "Unifor is not only dedicated to defending the rights of health care workers in all classifications,

but also to protecting and supporting our public health care system which is vital to every single Canadian," said Dias. 

November 6 health rallies

Rallies will be held November 6 to support health care workers (many now in bargaining) in several cities across Ontario, including Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Sault Ste. Marie and London. See the next Uniforum for full coverage.

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hike..." on page1

for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), was featured in major newspapers and on TV broadcasts across the country after its October 21 release.

"The quality of work Unifor does is being recognized outside the labour movement. That is how we are going to change the debate in this country," said Unifor National President Jerry Dias.

The report, by Unifor economists Jordan Brennan and Jim Stanford, concludes that employment levels are overwhelmingly determined by larger macroeconomic factors than the minimum wage rate.

In fact, it found, higher

minimum wages could just as easily result in more jobs, not less, by stimulating buying power.

Canadian policy makers should feel confident to move ahead with boosting the minimum wage, hopefully toward a living wage level, in a gradual and ongoing manner, without fearing that this will negatively shock employment levels, the authors suggest.

"Our results confirm that stimulating more purchasing power in the economy is the most important way to support job creation," Stanford said as the report was released.

"The stagnation of overall wage levels has contributed to the weak demand conditions holding back



Unifor Economist Jim Stanford at the recent Good Jobs Summit.

Canada's economy, and increasing the minimum wage would in fact help to address that weakness."

The authors conclude that stronger minimum wages can be an important and effective tool in boosting earnings for low-waged workers, promoting

greater equality and reducing poverty.

"The minimum wage is not solely an anti-poverty measure; it has a broader effect in strengthening labour incomes," said Brennan.

To read the report, go to: policyalternatives.ca. 

Ford move shows need for industrial policy

Unifor is disappointed that the Ford Motor Company and the federal and provincial governments were unable to reach an agreement that would have secured more than 1,000 good jobs in Windsor and the long-term stability of the Windsor plant.

Unifor had hoped that months of discussions between Ford, two levels of government and the union

would result in significant investment which would have secured the production of a global engine at the Windsor facility.

The global engine is expected to be built in Mexico.

Unifor National President Jerry Dias said the decision shows the need for an industrial strategy in Canada to ensure good jobs for future generations of

Canadians.

“The auto industries that are flourishing around the world are ones where there is a deep commitment from government and an understanding of the importance and wisdom of investment – which always pays dividends.”

It is estimated that for every job created in an auto manufacturing facility, another 10 jobs are created

elsewhere in the production chain.

“While we are disappointed that this work will be lost to Mexico, we remain optimistic that the tide is changing. Government, industry and labour are increasingly committed to finding ways of securing the strategic investments we need to rebuild our manufacturing base,” stressed Dias. 

Unifor candidates win municipal elections

Unifor congratulates the many progressive candidates who were elected in recent weeks in municipal and school board elections in Ontario and Manitoba.

“Unifor is pleased that many excellent candidates were elected and re-elected,” said Jerry Dias Unifor National President.

In Ontario, Unifor member Paul Pugh was re-elected to city council in Thunder Bay, while Unifor

member Mike Devine was newly elected to city council in Cambridge.

Unifor is also looking forward to working with the many progressive councillors who were elected across the province, including Maria Augimeri in Toronto and John Shields in Oshawa.

“Strong, progressive local politicians are essential to our efforts to build prosperous and



Mike Devine (in green) and campaign volunteers attended the Hespeler: A Day & A Night arts festival.

inclusive communities and economies,” said Katha Fortier, Unifor Ontario Regional Director.

In Manitoba, Unifor member Cindy Turner was elected as a school board trustee in Winnipeg.

“Democracy and community thrive when progressive community members run for political office so that they can contribute to the public good,” said Joie Warnock, Unifor’s Western Director. 

Three Quebec forestry regions vote for strike

In a series of local meetings held in Saguenay-Lac-Saint-Jean, Abitibi and on the North Coast in recent weeks, Unifor members voted more than 90 per cent in favour of a strike if necessary at Resolute Forest Products, and in support of efforts to pressure the company, in a lead up to a strike.

“Our members face an unusual situation – negotiations are at an impasse because of government inaction,” said Renaud Gagné, assistant to

the Unifor Quebec Director.

Conditions for forestry workers have been worsening since April 2013 when gaps in legislation prevented the union from being recognized as the official bargaining agent of the workers employed in newly created jobs in nearby locations. Unifor has repeatedly asserted that a legal vacuum is depriving workers of the protection of a collective agreement in some areas.

The previous Parti

Quebecois government publicly committed to resolving the issue a year ago. In December 2012, a parliamentary committee looked into the issue, with parties agreeing that action must be taken. The Liberal government, elected in April of this year, has so far failed to realize any commitments to addressing this ongoing problem.

The union recently presented its concerns about labour rights within the forestry sector at a

meeting with Minister of Forest, Wildlife and Parks Laurent Lesard.

“We are now relying on him to act and implement the necessary measures. For our members, the situation is unfair and unacceptable. We shouldn’t forget that it was the government who created this legal vacuum – it is now their responsibility to repair the damage it has created. In the meantime, employers, like Resolute, are taking full advantage,” said Gagné. 