

Steelworkers Overcome Wildfire



BEFORE



Steelworker Jose Acevedo amidst the ruins of his family's home in Fort McMurray.

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On the cover: Jose Acevedo, a member of TWU, USW Local 1944, in front of the rubble of his former house that was burnt to ash in the Fort McMurray wildfire. Inset: What Jose's home looked like before the wildfire. Cover photo courtesy Jose Acevedo.

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Resilience ar

Our USW members in Fort McMurray lived through the horrific, out-of-control Alberta wildfire earlier this summer.

Jose Acevedo is shown on the cover outside the rubble of his home that burned to ashes. Jose is a member of TWU, USW Local 1944.

As the fires raged, Steelworkers stepped up and reached out, asking, "What do you need?" Our members supported each other through the crisis: personal phone calls, checking in; calls for donations through our broad union network; Steelworkers Humanity Fund contributions to wildfire relief.

Our Fort McMurray members have returned to work and are rebuilding, showing their strength and commitment to both their working lives and to their community.

This strength, resilience and caring for each other is a hallmark of what it means to be Steelworkers. It's what we count on at the bargaining table, when we fight for fairness, to reduce inequality, to end violence against women, to stop workplace injuries and deaths.

This issue of USW@Work includes numerous stories that demonstrate our resilience and solidarity as people, as workers, as neighbours, as friends, as a union. We are stronger together – and that makes a difference.

Ken Neumann
National Director

nd **Solidarity**



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National Manufacturing Strategy Key

If the federal government is serious about protecting the environment and middle-class jobs, it must develop a national strategy to support Canada's steel and manufacturing industries, Steelworkers say.

The failure of successive federal governments to embrace a manufacturing and industrial strategy has contributed to hundreds of thousands of lost jobs and environmental harm, USW National Director Ken Neumann told a parliamentary committee in October.

Despite these public policy failures, Canada's steel industry still produces \$14-billion worth of goods annually and directly employs over 20,000 Canadians who earn an average

of \$70,000 per year. More than 100,000 other middle-class jobs are indirectly supported by the steel sector.

Federal support for the steel manufacturing sector is clearly in the country's economic and environmental interests.

– Ken Neumann

"Action on jobs and the environment must be incorporated into a new industrial strategy," Neumann said in a compelling submission to the Parliamentary Committee on Industry, Science and Technology.

"It is important to note that the wealth of economic benefits provided by Canadian-made steel comes at a fraction of the environmental footprint of foreign-made steel" that is being dumped into the country, he said.

Carbon emissions from Canadian-produced steel are roughly 56 kilograms per tonne, whereas emissions are more than 10 times higher (600 kg/tonne) from steel produced in China and more than 15 times higher (900 kg/tonne) from steel produced in India.

"China's steel industry alone is the source of 50% of the world's CO2 output," the USW's submission notes. "Thus, supplying the Canadian market with Canadian-made steel



Photo: Steve Dietz

Way to Better Economy, Environment

not only makes economic sense, it is environmentally responsible.”

Given the economic and environmental implications, “it is disturbing that the Government of Canada’s 2015 federal budget, which called for billions of dollars for infrastructure spending, makes no commitment to the purchase of Canadian-made steel.”

The USW’s calls for meaningful action from the federal government to address the steel crisis are supported by municipal politicians, business leaders and domestic steel producers across the country.

The gravity of the situation is reflected by a joint appeal to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau by the USW and the Canadian Steel

Producers Association (CSPA), calling for decisive action from the government to avert “irreversible harm” to Canada’s steel industry.

Two of the country’s largest steelmakers, Essar Steel Algoma in Sault Ste. Marie and U.S. Steel Canada in Hamilton and Nanticoke, Ont., are operating under creditor protection, with thousands of jobs and pensions at stake. Hundreds of other jobs have been lost recently as other Canadian steel producers have had to cut production.

The government must take immediate and long-term action to defend Canada’s steel industry and fulfill its pledge to protect middle-class jobs and the environment.

“This lack of government support

must be reversed,” Neumann said, “Federal support for the steel manufacturing sector is clearly in the country’s economic and environmental interests.” ■

Canada’s steel industry:

- ✔ **Direct jobs: over 20,000**
- ✔ **Indirect jobs supported: 100,000**
- ✔ **Annual production: 12 million tonnes**
- ✔ **Annual sales: \$14 billion**
- ✔ **Annual payroll: \$1.7 billion**

Proposed Deal Offers Hope for Ontario Steelworkers

There is cautious optimism over an agreement between the Ontario government and a potential buyer for U.S. Steel Canada operations that have been under creditor protection for more than two years.

Bedrock Industries reached an agreement with the province over terms of a potential purchase of U.S. Steel Canada. The agreement includes a commitment from Bedrock to continue operating steel plants in Hamilton and Nanticoke, Ont.

As of press time, the fate of the agreement and U.S. Steel Canada – which is operating under terms of the Companies’ Creditors Arrangement Act (CCAA) – remained undetermined.

While a final decision will rest with the court overseeing the CCAA

proceedings, any restructuring of the company requires the support of key stakeholders such as the province and the USW, which represents affected workers and pensioners.

“We are encouraged by many aspects of the framework agreement between the Ontario government and Bedrock Industries,” USW District 6 Director Marty Warren said when the deal was announced in September.

Still, many challenges must be resolved by Bedrock, including negotiating new collective agreements with Steelworkers Local 1005 in Hamilton and Local 8782 in Nanticoke, Warren noted.

“The deal is far from perfect, given the challenges that arise from such a lengthy and complex insolvency

process,” he said. “However, after two years in CCAA protection and after numerous discussions with other bidders, we believe this could lead to a good final deal for the union’s members and retirees.”

The USW recognizes the Ontario government’s efforts to find a resolution to the U.S. Steel Canada insolvency, but the same can’t be said for the federal Liberal government.

“It has been a stressful and painful two years for our members and pensioners,” Warren said.

“The federal government has not been engaged and has not offered any material support – neither in this case nor to help other communities across the country hurting from the steel crisis.” ■

Betraying its promise of progressive policies for Canadian workers, Justin Trudeau's Liberal government is fostering growth and abuses of the scandal-plagued Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP).

Soon after coming to power, the Liberals moved quickly to reverse positive, albeit minor, changes to the TFWP made by the previous Conservative government.

The Conservatives limited the number of temporary foreign workers an employer could hire to 10% of its workforce. Not only do the Liberals plan to boost the limit to 20% generally, for some industries they're already allowing employers to hire unlimited numbers of temporary foreign workers.

'Silly Rules'

Immigration Minister John McCallum scoffed at regulations intended to encourage employers to hire unemployed Canadians, describing them as "silly rules" that his government would eliminate.

Now, a Liberal-dominated parliamentary committee has recommended changes to the TFWP favouring a pro-business agenda that would allow the program's excesses to continue. There are few recommendations benefitting Canadians or temporary workers, with the committee failing to call for a guaranteed path to citizenship for exploited migrant workers.



Liberal Bait a Temporary Wo



Despite promising "real change" more than one year ago, the federal Liberals are moving forward with the previous Conservative government's secret trade deals that will kill tens of thousands of middle-class jobs.

The Liberals are using public "consultations" to actively promote the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), an agreement that threatens 60,000 good Canadian jobs, will harm the environment and will lead to greater inequality in our country.

Research indicates the TPP will cost thousands of jobs in Canada's automobile industry,



and Switch on orker Program

TFWP Critic Trudeau Exposed as TFW Employer

The Liberals' plan comes on the heels of revelations of hypocrisy from the prime minister, who has been exposed as a former temporary foreign worker employer.

A media investigation uncovered that, as an MP – before he became Liberal Leader – Trudeau and his wife took advantage of the TFWP to hire a nanny for their children.

The Trudeaus' TFWP application would have claimed that they needed to hire a temporary foreign worker because they could not find a Canadian nanny.

Critics note that Trudeau's significant inherited wealth, combined with

the couple's healthy income, would easily allow them to pay a wage that would entice Canadian applicants. That was clear after Trudeau became prime minister and was able to find two Canadian nannies willing to work for wages ranging from \$11 to \$20 an hour.

So after taking advantage of the TFWP as an MP, Trudeau's view of the program apparently changed when he became Liberal leader in 2014. By that time he was telling Canadians the program should be "dramatically" scaled back, because "it drives down wages and displaces Canadian workers."

Now, as prime minister, Trudeau's position appears to have changed once again. ■

which accounts for one-third of all demand for Canadian-made steel. The TPP will allow more sourcing of steel from countries like China which have flooded the Canadian market with illegally subsidized steel.

42,000 Steel, Auto Jobs at Risk

Up to 42,000 automotive and steel workers in Canada are at risk of losing their jobs from the TPP.

The Liberals also are working aggressively on the international stage for passage of a Canada-Europe agreement, known as CETA, that threatens thousands more Canadian jobs, our health care and public services and that will lead to huge increases in prescription drug costs.

Both the TPP and CETA were negotiated in secret, largely guided by the interests and demands of multinational corporations and wealthy elites.

These agreements will allow corporations to sue Canadian governments – in secret tribunals – whenever these corporations claim they are adversely affected by laws enacted by our democratically elected governments to protect workers, communities, public services or the environment.

Canada Most-Sued Nation

Canada already is the most widely sued developed country in the world under so-called investor rights rules of existing trade agreements.

A growing number of Canadians are speaking out against the TPP and CETA. Like most Canadians, Steelworkers are not anti-trade, but we oppose bad agreements that benefit the wealthy few, USW leaders stated in a brief submitted to the federal Standing Committee on International Trade.

"We believe that trade as an instrument of economic policy can forge a new approach; one that would lift wages up rather than push them down, one that would reduce our growing trade deficit, one that would promote domestic manufacturing and employment rather than more outsourcing and offshoring, one that would begin to reverse the widening gap of income inequality." ■

Attack on Card Check

UNITED STEELWORKERS
USW
MÉTALLOS

Stronger Together for All Employees
United Steelworkers (USW)
United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union

Sign and date beside the gold Xs, then complete the other side.
I apply for and accept membership in the United Steelworkers (USW) and have paid \$5 for membership.

X Happy NEW USW Member
Signature of Applicant

X 11 30 2016
Date Month Day Year

I have received this application and \$5 for USW membership from the person whose signature appears above.

USW Organizer
Name of receiver

USW Organizer
Signature of receiver

11 30 2016
Month Day Year

RECEIPT
\$5, as required by the Canada Labour Code was received from:
USW Member
Name of employee
11 30 2016
Month Day Year

Received by:
USW Organizer
Signature of receiver

UNITED STEELWORKERS
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Manitoba

Manitoba's Conservative government is taking aim at workers' right to join a union and Steelworkers are ready to fight back.

Premier Brian Pallister and his government have introduced Bill 7, the Labour Relations Amendment

Act, which would end the long-standing card-check system, allowing unions to form if a super-majority – 65% – of workers signed union cards.

Steelworker and Manitoba NDP MLA Tom Lindsey said the Conservatives want to eliminate card-based

organizing because it's the fairest option workers have to unionize.

"The whole point of this bill is it will make it more difficult for workers to organize into a union," said Lindsey.

"It's an attack on workers, because as it becomes more difficult for them to organize, it then becomes more difficult for them to have a voice, to have their rights protected."

In the last five years, almost 900 working Manitobans have signed up to join the United Steelworkers and build a better life for themselves and their families.

Steelworkers across Manitoba are standing up to tell Premier Pallister that workers deserve a free and fair choice to join a union – not a harsh attack on their rights. ■

USW for Shared Prosperity

British Columbia

How can British Columbia achieve a robust and growing economy with shared prosperity for workers, communities and businesses?

That's the question a new initiative is seeking to answer – and Steelworkers are at the table offering their ideas.

The Regional Prosperity Initiative, launched by the Metro Vancouver Regional District, is bringing together business, non-profit, academic and labour representatives in an effort to build a plan that will see the region and the province become an epicentre for economic growth that benefits everyone.

United Steelworkers District 3 is participating as the labour representative, bringing the

perspective of workers to the initiative's work.

"Our economy needs to be producing well-paying jobs that ensures workers and communities are sharing in the prosperity they're

creating," said Stephen Hunt, USW District 3 Director (Western Canada).

More information about the initiative is available at www.mvprosperity.org. ■





Renewal After **WILDFIRE**

Steelworkers Solidarity for Fort McMurray

John Alma was in Toronto when he got the distressing text message from his wife back home in Fort McMurray. His family was being evacuated as a massive wildfire encroached on their neighbourhood.

John tells the story of his family's harrowing escape from the fire as if he had been there with them. Here and there he pauses, overcome with emotion, even though he has told this story over and over and is generously sharing it with his union.

John's wife told him the sky was pitch black and looked like an apocalypse. She had 20 minutes to gather their 13-year-old daughter, 18-year old son, their cat and their dog. They went to John's sister's home in another neighbourhood. There, the family hung out, watching the news, until this neighbourhood, too, was evacuated.

Highway 63 South is the only way out of town. But the fire had jumped the southbound highway, forcing authorities to send people north – towards the camps of Alberta's oil fields.

After two hours of driving north, crawling in slow traffic, the family heard that the southbound highway was open again. They also knew via social media and the radio that the camps were full. So they turned around and drove back south.

The hotel at the south end of town was engulfed in flames as they passed it. Once out of town, cars were using all four lanes of the divided highway to head south because no one was headed north. And people were running out of gas.

Continued on page 10



Members of TWU, USW Local 1944, together again at a Unit 210 meeting in August. Jose Acevedo is holding the right side of the first USW flag; John Alma is at the centre of the second flag, wearing a hat. Local 1944 Union Representative Juanita West is the third person to the right of Jose.

We are a stronger, tighter-knit community of people who have chosen to live here. We want to be here.

– John Alma

As his family was driving the highway with flames on either side, John was in Toronto at TWU, USW Local 1944's Annual Delegated Meeting (ADM) as a delegate and finance committee member. John is one of the 42 members of Unit 210 of Local 1944 who work for Telus in Fort McMurray.

Homes Burnt To Ashtrays

Several members lost their homes and many others experienced varying damage.

Like John, Jose Acevedo wasn't at home in Fort McMurray as the fires reached the built-up communities. He was in Edmonton with his wife and three-year-old son en route to a vacation in Cuba. On Tuesday, May 3, he got a call from a co-worker that workers had been told to go home early because evacuations had been called – providing people time to collect valuables or paperwork. Jose had to decide whether to continue on the trip to Cuba, or cancel and stay in Edmonton to wait and see. The family decided to go to Cuba.

Checking social media every day, Jose's wife was concerned about

their house. Jose didn't have any specific updates though, until his return to Edmonton on May 13. Google maps had shown them that their neighbourhood was destroyed, but Jose wanted confirmation.

Jose called his supervisor to check on his work schedule. It was the supervisor who broke the news that Jose's house was gone.

Jose didn't go back to see the destruction right away. Telus gave him a week off to deal with paperwork and insurance and stock up on supplies and basic needs for his family. The company found work for Jose in Edmonton until the family returned to Fort McMurray in mid-June.

The first time Jose went to see where his house had been, he couldn't get to the lot – authorities had limited access to the burnt-out areas. But Jose could see that everything was flattened – just rubble and ashes were left.

When he was allowed into the neighbourhood, Jose borrowed a white jumpsuit and wore a facemask to protect himself from the chemicals and pollutants in

the air and debris. The ashes from the fire were white; what was once a house looked like an ashtray.

Jose is philosophical about the loss. "I have been affected by other issues in my life; losing family members back home in El Salvador during the civil war. I take life as it comes. My wife was very affected. But we are lucky that we were away – we escaped that part," he says, referring to the experience of driving through flames that John's family went through.

Stepping Up

Ivana Niblett knew that Local 1944 members had homes in the path of the wildfire that came to be known as The Beast. Now working in Edmonton for USW Local 1-207, Ivana used to be one of the National Vice-Presidents for the Telecommunications Workers Union (TWU). TWU merged with the USW in 2014, becoming TWU, USW Local 1944. Ivana worked closely with the Fort McMurray local and has ongoing friendships and connections with the members there.

When she heard about the evacuations, Ivana called John to see if anyone in the unit needed anything. That's when she found out that John was in Toronto and concerned about his family who were making their way to Edmonton.

Ivana jumped into action, booking the last room in a hotel she knew so that John's family would have a place to stay when they made it to Edmonton.

Solidarity – We are Givers

The urge to help others in times of need is inherent in us as humans and as union members. When things feel helpless, the union

offers a structure for coming together and making a difference through our collective efforts.

As the Fort McMurray delegate at the Toronto meetings of Local 1944, John was the local's direct connection to its 42 members living through the disaster, even as it was unfolding.

So the union stepped up. TWU, USW Local 1944, its members and units across the country made donations to Unit 210.

Local 1944 raised \$15,000 at the ADM and International President Leo W. Gerard pledged to triple that. Quebec units of Local 1944 collected boxes of clothing, toys and household basics to ship to the members.

"The immediate generosity and willingness to support each other during tragedy was inspiring," said Lee Riggs, TWU, USW Local 1944 National President.

Working out of Calgary, Juanita West is the Local Union Representative for the Fort McMurray members in Unit 210.

Also attending the Local 1944 meeting, she got on the phone, calling all the members to make sure they were okay and find out what they needed.

Marty Gibbons, President of USW Local 1-417 based in Kamloops, B.C., along with Ray White, President of USW Local 1-207 in Edmonton, Ivana's local, put out a call through Wood Council Chairperson Bob Matters to Wood Council locals, raising more than \$8,000. Local 1-207 topped that up to \$10,000.

Steelworkers Humanity Fund Donates

In May the Steelworkers Humanity Fund made an immediate \$10,000 donation to the Red Cross's Fort McMurray wildfire relief appeal, followed by a \$69,000 contribution split evenly between the Canadian Mental Health Association (Wood Buffalo region), the Wood Buffalo Food Bank Association and the Edmonton Food Bank. The fund appreciates the \$29,000 in special contributions made by USW locals

across the country and the USW staff union in response to the union's emergency wildfire appeal.

"The wildfire and evacuation have deeply affected individuals and families, not only the physical destruction but the emotional trauma that many continue to struggle with," said Ken Neumann, USW National Director and President of the Steelworkers Humanity Fund.

Back To Work

John Alma stayed six days in the hotel in Edmonton before returning to work in Fort McMurray. He was one of the first allowed back in. "I'm like a shark; I have to keep moving."

Authorized by his job to access the neighbourhood where his house was, he could tell that his home had survived the fire.

In late July, Local 1-207 hosted a barbecue at John's house for Unit 210 members. The event was an opportunity for the members to talk and reconnect.

Continued on page 12

Notley:

Steady Hand, Open Communication

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley has been praised for her handling of the crisis and its aftermath. As the fire raged, she provided daily updates and secured extended Employment Insurance coverage for those affected. Notley has insisted that no rent gouging would be tolerated during the rebuilding period.

Jose and John give credit to officials on every level who enabled almost 90,000 people to evacuate safely.

Alberta Premier Rachel Notley surveying wildfire damage in Fort McMurray.



Photo: Government of Alberta, used under CC BY-ND 2.0

"We really appreciated it. It showed that we are not alone; that there are people thinking about us," said John.

Ivana, along with Scott Ruston from Local 1-207, drove up from Edmonton on behalf of the Wood Council, bringing Safeway gift cards for the members from the donations they had raised, demonstrating the USW's solidarity for all that they had been through. Two months after the fires, Ivana didn't have to look far for devastation, but was surprised to see green ground of new growth – offering hope for renewal.

At a meeting in August, Unit 210 members reconvened in a Fort McMurray community centre to share their stories and receive the contributions Juanita had received from across the USW.

What stands out from the stories of the Unit 210 members is their

resilience. Only one of the members has left, taking retirement and moving away because the air quality following the fires was aggravating his asthma. The rest have stayed and are recovering within the community. Jose and his family are living in a rental apartment until they can rebuild.

"We are a stronger, tighter-knit community of people who have chosen to live here. We want to be here. This is my home," said John.

Fort McMurray Facts

- ▶ Fort McMurray: 400 km northeast of Edmonton
- ▶ Population: 61,000
- ▶ Evacuees displaced due to wildfires: 90,000 (from Fort McMurray and surrounding communities)

- ▶ Wildfire area: 590,000 hectares including the portion in Sask.; more than 1,000 km² covering an area larger than Calgary, Vancouver, Halifax or Winnipeg
- ▶ 2,400 buildings destroyed, including 20% of homes
- ▶ Wildfire began on May 1, 2016; declared under control on July 5, 2016

Make Sure You're A Contributor

Through the Steelworkers Humanity Fund, USW members are part of helping those in need with your pennies-per-hour contributions deducted from your paycheques.

Find out if your local has negotiated contributions to the Steelworkers Humanity Fund in your collective agreement. Check your paystub or ask your Unit Chair or Local Union President. Contributions are tax deductible and your donations make a difference. ■



Photo: Government of Alberta, used under CC BY-ND 2.0



The Kids Are Alright USW Scholarships



Joanie Bergeron, Sept-Îles, Que.

James Fairhurst, Sparwood, B.C.

Mykeal Kennedy, Garson, Ont.

While he's never been on strike, Mykeal Kennedy knows how a labour dispute can affect a family. Mykeal remembers what it was like while his dad, a USW Local 6500 member in Sudbury, was on strike for a year seeking a better contract with Vale. In his essay on the role of unions in today's society, Mykeal wrote about the value of sticking together and standing up for what you believe in. Mykeal is one of 19 recipients of 2016 USW post-secondary education scholarships, valued at \$1,000 each, available to members or children of USW members. Joanie Bergeron of Sept-Îles, Que., received a scholarship for her essay on the importance of unions in countering inequality. "The union plays a vital role in advancing pay equity to ensure women receive

equal pay and working conditions," wrote Joanie, whose father is a member of USW Local 6254 at Wabush Mines.

James Fairhurst from Sparwood, B.C., wrote about being inspired by his dad's involvement with TWU, USW Local 1944, and how his dad was motivated by his father's activity with the International Woodworkers of America (IWA) in the 1950s.

James wrote: "My dad says he didn't see a dentist until he was 15 years old ... because they had no dental plan ... I understand that it was the union that asked for the dental plan that they got through bargaining."

USW Commitment to Learning

Post-secondary scholarships are part of the USW's proud tradition of encouraging education and lifelong

learning for our members and our members' children.

The David Ellis Health and Safety Scholarship awards \$500 prizes to children or grandchildren of USW members in Districts 3 and 6 for essays or videos on health and safety. Every year, 60 young workers are killed on the job. David Ellis, 18, was one of them. It was his second day of work.

The USW also offers two lifelong learning scholarships of \$1,000 to USW members enrolled in public post-secondary education or an accredited labour program.

Don't miss out – mark your calendars and check back in April and May 2017 to download and share the applications. The annual application deadline is June 30. ■

www.usw.ca/scholarships

From airline employees to coal miners and hotel workers, Steelworkers' solidarity continues to achieve strong collective agreements. Here are some recent examples of USW bargaining successes.



Improvements trump concessions

The 330 members of Local 206G at the Owens Illinois glass plant in Pointe-Saint-Charles, Que., achieved several gains in a new contract and beat back all company demands for concessions. The agreement includes total wage increases of 6.25% over the three-year term, pension improvements and enhanced language including restrictions on hiring temporary employees.



9% increase at Vale

Mine and mill workers at Vale in Voisey's Bay, Labrador, reached a three-year agreement earlier this year providing wage increases of 9% over the term. The 300 members of Local 9508 successfully fought back concession demands and maintained their cost-of-living allowance.



Seniority rights secured

Local 7065 members at Construction Tshuetin in Sept-Îles, Que., reached a five-year collective agreement that achieved their primary objective – securing seniority rights. The agreement provides 2% annual wage increases and contract language improvements including overtime rules and vacation policies.



Cost-of-living win

After mounting a public campaign for better working conditions, employees of GSI Prestige group, a sub-contractor at the Quality Inn of Dorval, Que., achieved a new contract with cost-of-living protections and other gains. The Local 9400 members will receive annual 2% wage increases over the three-year term, cost-of-living adjustments based on the consumer price index and greater employer contributions to group insurance plan costs.



Big Gains at American Airlines

USW Local 1976 members at American Airlines operations in Toronto, Montreal and Ottawa made significant gains in their first collective agreement following corporate and union mergers last year. The five-year agreement will reverse outsourcing, add unionized jobs, prioritize full-time jobs over part-time positions, improve working conditions and provide competitive wage increases. The contract covers more than 230 ticket and gate agents, baggage handlers, airport lounge employees and ramp workers.

Last year's merger of American Airlines and US Airways required a vote by employees to choose a single union to represent them, as Steelworkers represented US Airways employees while American Airlines employees were members of Unifor. More than two-thirds of affected employees voted for the Steelworkers.

The average wage increase in the contract's first year is about 15%, with total increases over five years amounting to nearly 25%. Employees also received a transitional payment, ranging from \$365 for workers with less than one year of service, to \$6,500 for employees with 17 or more years of service.

Another Pension Win in Quebec

Local 6213 is the fourth Steelworkers group in Quebec in recent months to successfully take on the two-tier pension fight for the next generation of workers.

Local 6213 members, who work at refractory brick manufacturer Resco in Grenville-sur-la-Rouge, were on strike for more than three months to defend the next generation, with the

company demanding the elimination of the defined benefit plan for new hires. The strike ended in September, with members ratifying a new contract preserving defined benefit pensions for all. "We are returning with our heads held high," said Local 6213 President Alain Desjardins, noting members accepted some concessions for all employees, rather than a substandard pension plan for new hires.



2000

Enhanced premiums, safety allowances

Local 2000 members in Cambridge, Ont., made several gains in a three-year deal with animal health products manufacturer Bimeda. The deal includes total wage increases of 5%, a new premium for employees who train co-workers, increased employer contributions to the pension plan and higher payments for safety shoes, prescription safety glasses, massage therapy and shift premiums.

1-405

Credit union deal in Nelson

Local 1-405 members at the Nelson and District Credit Union in British Columbia negotiated a four-year contract providing total wage hikes of 7.4%, additional vacation for long-term employees, and improved benefits, contract language and job share flexibility.

1-405

City workers improve contract

City of Kimberley, B.C., employees, members of USW Local 1-405 reached a four-year agreement with a total wage increase of 6%, a new job evaluation system and numerous improvements to contract language on issues including seniority, vacation scheduling, dental coverage, health care accounts, probation and union leave.

2890-03

Better relations sought at Praxair

An employer commitment to improved labour-management relations is among the improvements in a three-year agreement between Local 2890-03 members and Praxair Canada in Paris, Ont. The deal includes total wage increases of 6% and higher shift premiums, with all monetary increases retroactive to the previous contract's expiry.

6887

Pensions boosted at Glencore

Local 6887 improved wages and pensions in a three-year agreement at Glencore Canada's CCR refinery in Montreal. Members not only preserved their defined-benefit pension plan but achieved monthly benefit increases, as well as 6.45% total wage hikes, shift premium increases and enhancements of the dental and short-term and long-term disability plans.

SPEAK OUT Against Violence

Jeff Bromley had a tough time watching two videos included in the National Women's Committee's anti-violence presentation.

"It's hard stuff to watch," said Jeff, Financial Secretary for Local 1-405, based in Cranbrook, B.C. Along with First Vice-President Doug Wood, Jeff stepped into the local's boardroom while Women's Committee co-chair Veronica Tanner was rehearsing her delivery of an anti-violence presentation, a new initiative of the USW's National Women's Committee.

While Local 1-405 covers a variety of workplaces, many of its members are men working in sawmills. Veronica's practice-run of the material led to Jeff and Doug taking the presentation to units across the local – to help break the silence and support the Women's Committee.

"We want to get more men talking about ending violence against women," said Jeff.

White Ribbon began as a campaign for men to speak out against violence against women. Local 1-405's Women's Committee introduced a version of the White Ribbon campaign to the local a few years ago. It fit with the mandate of both White Ribbon and the Women's Committee



USW Local 1-405 members Jeff Bromley and Veronica Tanner with anti-violence initiative materials in Cranbrook, B.C.

that Doug and Jeff would find opportunities to deliver the presentation to unit members.

Women of Steel Launch Anti-Violence Initiative

The USW National Women's Committee decided to do more within our union to educate and involve our members in ending violence. The committee developed an anti-violence kit so members could deliver presentations to local and area council meetings and even in workplaces with co-operative employers.

The kit includes a PowerPoint presentation with two videos, posters, a guide for bargaining

language to support victims of domestic violence, brochures and white ribbon pins that can be handed out to wear as a symbol of one's commitment to end violence against women and girls.

Why Aren't We Talking About This?

One in three women in Canada over the age of 16 experiences sexual assault. Aboriginal women are more at risk. At least 1,073 Aboriginal women were murdered between 1980 and 2014. One out of every five female homicide victims is Aboriginal, while only one out of every 20 Canadians is Aboriginal.

A recent cross-Canada survey found that one in three workers has experienced domestic violence and this violence follows them to work.

Statistics are sobering, but it's the stories behind them that motivate action for change. The USW presentations have prompted discussion and action on gender-based violence, bringing a taboo topic out into the open.

Sudbury Signs On

Terri Rinta put a rush on the materials so the anti-violence presentation could be delivered at the USW's North-Eastern Area Council meeting in Sudbury at the end of September.

Terri serves on the executive of USW Local 2020 and chairs the local's Women's Committee. She asked District 6 Human Rights Committee member Carolyn Szilva to deliver the anti-violence presentation.

The session prompted a member to share her story of helping a friend who was fleeing an abusive relationship. Her friend's husband then came after the member. At work.

The member's employer was unprepared and didn't know how to respond, so the member contacted police and created a safety plan for herself in case she was threatened again. The member continues to support her friend.

The Area Council supported the initiative with a unanimous vote and locals signed on to bring the anti-violence initiative to Timmins, Sault Ste. Marie and across Northern Ontario.

"It helps spark that conversation," said Terri.

Communication Leads to Action

Back in Cranbrook, B.C., the Women's Committee's work is paying off. Members of the committee brought forward collective agreement language around leave provisions for domestic violence situations during bargaining with a hotel in Kimberley.

Let's End Violence

The white ribbon is a symbol of men (and women) working to end violence against women and girls.

Wear this white ribbon sticker proudly to show you support ending violence against women and girls.

"There's more communication," said Jeff. "Whether it's around the poster, the video or our collective agreements."

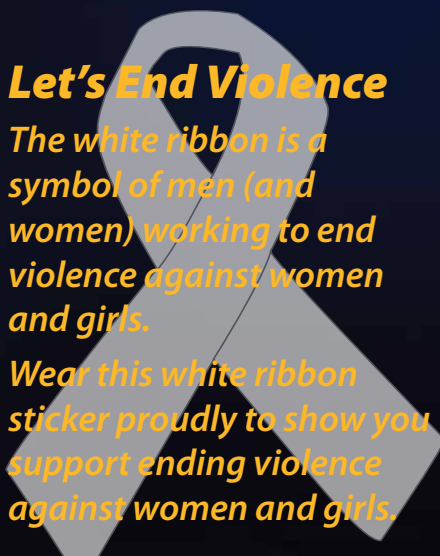
Talking about violence against women breaks the silence, paving the way for union action – supporting local women's resource centres, bargaining anti-violence provisions into our agreements and empowering members to act to end violence.

Speak Out Against Violence

One of the most important things you can do to help end gender-based violence is to speak out against it.

- Request or Give a Presentation
- Connect with your national or district women's committee member to request kit materials and support for an anti-violence presentation at your workplace or local meeting.

More information and videos: www.usw.ca/anti-violence ■



Liberals Kill Anti-Scab Bill; Steelworkers Demand a Manufacturing Strategy

Anti-Scab Legislation



Patrick Veinot, Steelworker and former Vale employee.

Steelworkers joined NDP Leader Tom Mulcair in October for a news conference prior to debate on an NDP private member's bill to ban replacement workers in federally regulated workplaces.

"In Quebec, where there is anti-scab legislation, we know that strikes and lockouts are shorter and less prone to violence," said Steve Hadden, President of USW National Local 1976.

"I lost my job because of the company's use of so-called replacement workers," said Patrick

Veinot, former Vale employee. "The Liberal government should respect collective bargaining and balance in labour relations by banning this practice."

Unfortunately, the Liberals used their majority in Parliament to defeat the bill – even though it was simply a vote 'in principle' that would have allowed it to be considered by committee.

"The Liberal government has failed to live up to its promise of 'a fair and balanced approach to organized labour,'" said USW National Director Ken Neumann. "This government is siding with employers who use scabs to prolong strikes and lockouts." ■

Manufacturing Hearings



Photo: Steve Dietz

Neumann also addressed the Parliamentary Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, which is studying manufacturing in Canada and will make recommendations to Parliament.

"We believe the next chapter in manufacturing cannot be pursued without the input of the USW as a major stakeholder in Canada's economic future or, as the current Liberal government likes to put it, the 'building of the middle class,'" Neumann told the committee.

"Government policy and inaction in this vital sector has deeply eroded the middle class that collective bargaining helped to create. It has been replaced by insecurity, inequality and uncertainty, which we believe must be reversed for the sake of future generations." ■

Softwood Lumber Negotiations



Photo: Steve Dietz

As of writing, the Canada-U.S. Softwood Lumber Agreement deadline came and went in October with no deal.

With no agreement, punishing tariffs on Canadian wood products remained a possibility. Meanwhile, USW pushed for an agreement to protect jobs and communities while allowing fair access to the U.S. lumber market.

USW is proposing that forestry community restoration funds generated by cross-border measures be specifically earmarked for investing

in workers and communities, including training adjustment and ensuring abundant, healthy forests for future generations. ■



Two-Tier System Hurts Taxi Workers

Steelworkers join legal challenge of backroom Uber deal

Taxi drivers in several Quebec cities staged strikes and traffic slowdowns in October to protest the Liberal government's backroom deal with Uber to create a two-tier system allowing Uber and its drivers to skirt industry rules and regulations.

"We have the taxi industry that needs to work with all these regulations," said Benoit Jugand of the Regroupement des travailleurs autonomes Métallos (RTAM), a Steelworkers union group representing thousands of taxi workers.

However, the government's deal with Uber "is saying, 'we're creating an open market authorizing Uber to work without legislation, without rules and regulations,'" Jugand added.

The government's deal is a "pilot

project" allowing Uber to legally operate in Quebec on a one-year trial basis. There are no requirements for Uber or its drivers to buy or even rent traditional taxi permits. There are no restrictions limiting the number of Uber vehicles in service, their hours of service or the territory in which they can operate.

In contrast, taxi drivers continue to be subjected to more costly permits, regulations and restrictions.

In an open letter to Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard, industry representatives have argued the government should buy back the drivers' permits if it is not willing to ensure fairness for all drivers and operators in the industry.

The two-tier system will exacerbate a crisis that is significantly affecting the livelihoods of thousands of drivers, who have invested as much

as \$200,000 for their permits and vehicles.

The RTAM has joined with other taxi industry representatives to form a "common front" to mount a legal challenge to the two-tier system that gives an unfair advantage to Uber. The group is scheduled to argue its case in Quebec Superior Court in January.

The common front organization has called for a meeting with the Quebec premier to discuss its concerns over the taxi industry's future, but Couillard has refused such a meeting.

"We support modernization and innovation," the group stated in its open letter to the premier. "We oppose a two-tier system. We oppose inequality. We are opposed to the impoverishment of workers and, by extension, our society." ■

Make Every Vote Count

Electoral Reform: USW Supports

The parliamentary committee holding public hearings on electoral reform has been drawing crowds. That's good news.

The other good news is that the NDP pressured the Liberals to change the makeup of the committee. Now each party has committee seats to match the vote share from the last election.

The bad news is that the Liberals want an outcome that is very much to their advantage, and their parliamentary majority is enough to simply make the decision.

The government has a strong mandate to change our voting system. And our system does need to be changed – our current first-past-the-post system is unfair.

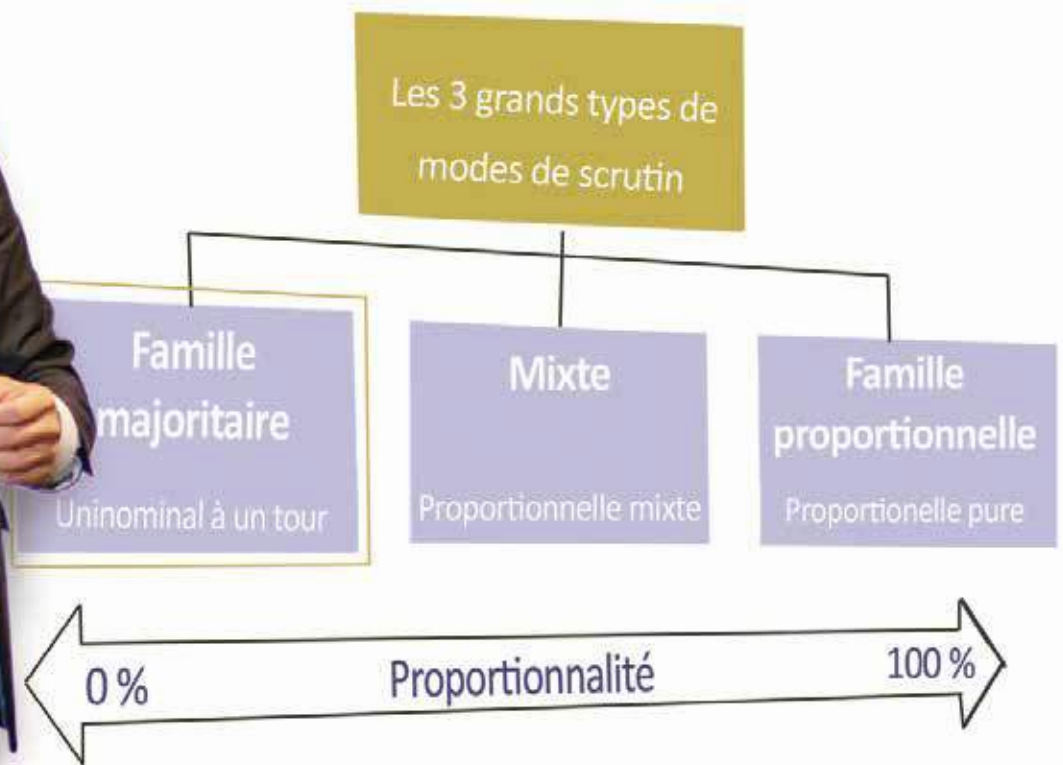
In the 2015 federal election, the Liberals won 39% of the vote, which gave them 54% of the seats, and 100% of the power in a majority government. This is known as a false majority.

Many progressives are in favour of proportional representation. The USW recommends a specific form of proportional representation: mixed-member proportional (MMP). Used in Germany and New Zealand and other democracies around the world, MMP would result in seats in the House of Commons reflecting how Canadians voted in an election, preventing false majorities.

MMP voting systems are more representative, produce collaborative governments and tend to see more women elected.

Mixed-Member Proportional (MMP) System

Debating the details of voting systems can sound complicated, but it doesn't have to be. Millions of voters in countries that have MMP find it easy. Liberals and Conservatives benefit from the current system over MMP. Liberals will strongly benefit from a ranked-ballot system.



Count S MMP

Conservatives will argue that we need a referendum to decide, knowing that every provincial referendum on changing a voting system has failed, resulting in the status quo: the same unfair first-past-the-post system.

Despite all the consultations, the Liberal majority government may change our voting system to suit its own interests regardless of the committees' work and public input.

For years, New Democrats have repeatedly pushed Liberal and Conservative governments to update our electoral system and support the MMP system as the fairest option.

The Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) supports proportional representation.

Promise – Broken?

At the end of October, on the heels of extensive committee work and public engagement on voting reform, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau openly mused about abandoning reform due to the substantial popularity of his government.

Backing away from such a prominent election promise prompted outcry from the press and the opposition parties. As NDP Leader Tom Mulcair asked Trudeau in the House, is this the #realchange the Prime Minister campaigned on?

Let's make voting fair; let's make every vote count. Support MMP as our next voting system. ■

Resources

- ▶ www.BroadbentInstitute.ca
- ▶ www.FairVote.ca
- ▶ www.CanadianLabour.ca/voting
- ▶ petition.ndp.ca/demand-that-your-vote-count

NDP MP Alexandre Boulerice hosting an electoral reform town hall.



Uproar prompts Quebec mining company to quickly rescind suspension of prominent Steelworkers activist

Mining company IAMGOLD beat a hasty retreat in September following a labour movement uprising over the suspension of a prominent Steelworkers health and safety activist in Quebec.

André Racicot, President of Steelworkers Local 9291 at IAMGOLD's Westwood Mine, east of Rouyn-Noranda, was suspended after he made a presentation to a Quebec government committee studying health and safety issues in the mining sector.

Considered the "dean" of health and safety activists in Quebec's mining industry, Racicot raised concerns about IAMGOLD's compliance with certain health and safety rules at his workplace.

A representative of an employers' association relayed Racicot's comments to IAMGOLD, which promptly suspended the union leader.

The Steelworkers demanded that Racicot's suspension be rescinded by noon the following day – a Friday. When the company did not react, the news media were alerted, labour leaders from several unions spoke out against the attempt to muzzle a health and safety activist and a demonstration was organized for the following Monday outside the mine.

The uproar and media coverage led to Racicot's swift reinstatement, without penalty.

Free Speech Essential for Activists

Steelworkers District 5 Director Alain Croteau called on Quebec's labour standards and workplace health and safety commission to review the matter and to make any changes necessary to ensure such an incident does not reoccur.

"We need to have the freedom to speak out without the fear of reprisal. It is only by discussing issues openly that we can make progress," Croteau said.

"There are still too many serious injuries and deaths in the mining sector. It is only because of the work being done by people on the ground such as André Racicot that we've seen any improvements at all. We refuse to allow one of our health and safety pioneers to be muzzled," he added. ■

Drumming for \$15

On Oct. 1, minimum wage went up by 15¢ in Ontario to \$11.40/hr. But that's not nearly enough.

Thousands rallied for decent work outside Queen's Park on Oct. 1, with drumbeats getting louder for a \$15 minimum wage and fairness for all workers in Ontario: no more scabs, paid sick days, make it easier to join unions, end contract flipping and more.

Jana Papuckoski spoke about working as a security guard in Whitby, earning \$12.50/hour. Jana says she's one of the lucky ones because she's represented by a union – she's the Recording Secretary for USW Local 5296.

"The union gives me a voice in my workplace; I have health benefits, a pension and union representation in addition to paid sick days, paid uniform and the right to the grievance procedure if I disagree with my employer's decisions."

However, under current rules, if her employer lost the security contract,



she would lose her union and the employees would have to start all over again.

"It's unacceptable to constantly have to renegotiate the terms of your employment every time somebody buys your job site, contract or company," says Jana.



Steelworkers rally for a \$15 minimum wage in Montreal.

The Queen's Park rally is part of the growing \$15 and Fairness movement.

Steelworkers brought a large contingent to the Montreal rally on Oct. 15, calling for a faster route to a \$15 minimum wage. More than 3,500 people filled the streets in a spirited demonstration of labour and community solidarity for a \$15 minimum wage to lift workers out of poverty. A study by the research group IRIS puts the wage for a decent life in Quebec even higher – \$15.10/hour.

Rachel Notley's NDP government in Alberta is on its way to a \$15 minimum wage by 2018. Leading in the polls ahead of the B.C. election next May, NDP leader John Horgan has pledged a \$15 minimum wage, as has Ontario NDP leader Andrea Horwath.

In September, the City of Vancouver voted to pursue Living Wage Employer certification for employees and sub-contractors. Vancouver's living wage is \$20.64/hour, much higher than B.C.'s minimum of \$10.85. A living wage covers the basics such as rent, food, transportation and childcare.

Unions are key mobilizers of the \$15 and Fairness



The union gives me a voice in my workplace; I have health benefits, a pension and union representation

Jana Papuckoski
USW Local 5296

movement. We are working alongside community groups to call for changes that would benefit all workers, not just our members. Raising minimum standards – whether its wages and safety, sick days or scheduling – helps all of us make it fair.

Find out more and get involved:
www.15andFairness.org ■





Nancy Hutchison, USW Department Leader for Health, Safety and the Environment; Leo W. Gerard, USW International President; Karyn Sedore; Detective Kevin Sedore; Ken Neumann, USW National Director.

Photo: Steve Dietz

Making a Difference

USW members across Canada are working hard to ensure that workplace deaths and injuries are investigated as potential cases of criminal negligence. It's the law – the Westray Law.

Toronto Detective Honoured

Detective Kevin Sedore investigated the 2009 Metron scaffolding collapse. A Metron manager was eventually convicted of criminal negligence and received a jail sentence of 3½ years – the first jail sentence since the Westray Law was passed in 2003.

When he investigated the incident, Sedore had confrontations with Ministry of Labour officials, whose tampering at the scene could have destroyed evidence needed if there were to be charges leading to a conviction. Sedore's determination was recognized with the USW's J. William Lloyd Award

at the International Health, Safety and Environment conference in September.

New Publication: Hell's History



Hell's History chronicles the horrors of workplace deaths in Canada and USW's campaign to Stop the Killing. Tom Sandborn, a journalist with *The Tyee*, outlines the repeated failures of employers to keep workers safe and the ongoing need for stronger

enforcement of the Westray Law. Read the PDF version at www.usw.ca/hells-history.

Momentum in Ottawa and B.C.

In June, The City of Ottawa voted unanimously to adopt the USW's motion for better Westray Law enforcement. A week later, Ottawa police launched a criminal investigation into the death of a young construction worker. Olivier Bruneau was killed in March when he was crushed by a slab of ice that fell off a nine-storey pit wall at a building site.

In July, the B.C. Ministry of Energy and Mines signed an agreement with the province's police agencies for a protocol on investigation of mine-site fatalities and bodily harm. The USW campaign is making a difference.

Make sure your community is on the map: www.StopTheKilling.ca ■

STOP THE KILLING ENFORCE THE LAW