



NEWS@6

FALL 2016

A Call to **ACTION**

I have had the privilege of serving as District 6 Director for nearly four years now and I continue to be amazed by the passion and talent of Steelworker activists.

A recent example came during our plans to revitalize our District 6 Human Rights Committee. Members across the district were invited to apply for positions, with applicants required to write essays describing their motivation for joining the committee.

I was blown away by the response, with so many Steelworkers providing compelling stories showing their commitment to human rights activism. The result is a new, 18-member Human Rights Committee ready to make great strides in moving

our equality agenda forward.

These 18 Steelworkers are building on our union's unmatched legacy of progressive activism. And while we are proud of this record of leadership, we can – and must – do more.

Every day, our members are confronted by employers eager to turn back the clock on the hard-fought gains we've made over years of collective bargaining.

Working people in every province of our district are faced with governments that support the corporate agenda rather than adopting the progressive policies needed to reverse growing inequality in our country.

Our workplaces, our communities and our society need more Steelworker activists. We need our current activists to engage, inspire and encourage more members to get involved in our union.

This is my appeal and my promise to our members – get active in your union and your union will support you. Your union will offer education, training and rewarding opportunities to bring positive change to your workplace, your community and our society.

We are faced with daunting challenges, but I know that you – members across our district – will step forward to build on the Steelworkers record of leadership in labour, political and social justice activism.

And I know I will continue to be amazed and inspired by your passion, talent and achievements.

In solidarity,

Marty Warren
USW District 6 Director

RALLY FOR DECENT WORK
SATURDAY OCTOBER 1
1:00PM • QUEEN'S PARK

Be a part of the growing movement for decent work for all!

515 • MAKE IT FAIR • #15andFairness #MakeItFair

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Improving Employee Rights

Ontario labour law reform interim report

Labour laws in Ontario are out of date. Just ask Bob Lapchuk, former USW 9176 member, who spent 22 months on the picket line because replacement workers are legal in Ontario. Bob was just one of many Steelworkers who made presentations to the Ontario government's Changing Workplaces Review.

The review panel released its interim report in July, identifying potential action to improve and modernize Ontario's outdated Employment Standards Act and Ontario Labour Relations Act.

The report summarizes current challenges workers face and cites proposals suggested by unions and community advocates to make Ontario more successful, equitable and ready for the future.

"After the review's final recommendations later this year, the Ontario government will have every reason to take real legislative action to stop the erosion of decent jobs and to provide employees with fairness when they seek to join unions," said USW District 6 Director Marty Warren.

Employees and their families need more stable jobs and working conditions, in scheduling, in work hours and pay, as well as fairness to join a union and exercise collective bargaining rights. Employees need a level playing field with employers to avoid lengthy strikes and lockouts.

Alongside the consultations, rallies and other actions for decent

work are building momentum for change. The corporate world is pushing hard for things to stay the same. Our job is to make a strong, unified case for labour law changes that will make the most difference for all.

Some of USW's proposals:

- Eliminate barriers to employees who want to choose union membership.
- Prevent employer intimidation and harassment of employees considering joining a union.
- Improve collective bargaining and dispute resolution processes.
- Maintain union protection when service provider contracts are flipped.
- Ensure equal pay, benefits and conditions for all employees (full-time, temporary, part-time).

USW District 6's submission to the review is available on our website.

What can USW members do?

- Join the Oct. 1 Rally for Decent Work at Queen's Park.
- Lobby your Member of Provincial Parliament – get in touch with the Ontario Federation of Labour for a lobby kit and background materials. ■



'The system is tilted'

As Steelworkers continue an all-out campaign to defend Ontario jobs and pensions threatened by a steel industry crisis, crucial action from provincial and federal governments remains elusive.

"We've asked our governments to step up and play a major role to support working families, retirees and this vital sector of our economy. So far that hasn't happened to any meaningful extent," says USW District 6 Director Marty Warren.

The USW is devoting resources at the local, district and national levels to support successful restructurings of two of the country's largest steelmakers – Essar Steel Algoma in Sault Ste. Marie and U.S. Steel



Stand Up for Steel against retirees and working people – that has to change.!

Why are the workers and the retirees always at the back of the line?

Canada operations in Hamilton and Nanticoke.

The union has presented detailed proposals to the federal and Ontario governments, urging immediate support for the troubled steel operations and implementation of an industry action plan to help ensure the sector's long-term sustainability.

Steelworkers also are calling on the federal government to overhaul Canada's 80-year-old corporate restructuring laws that stack the deck against workers and pensioners in insolvency cases.

– Marty Warren, USW District 6 Director

Warren praised the leadership of USW Local 2251 and Local 2724 – representing Essar Steel Algoma workers – and Local 1005 in Hamilton and Local 8782 in Nanticoke – representing U.S. Steel Canada employees – in their battle to save jobs and pensions and for exposing the failings of the bankruptcy protection and restructuring process.

The USW locals have drawn national media coverage for exposing the flawed process that has allowed both Essar Steel Algoma and U.S. Steel Canada to unilaterally reject purchase

bids that offered commitments to save jobs and pensions.

In U.S. Steel Canada's bankruptcy protection case, the company received court approval to eliminate vital health benefits for 20,000 retirees – even though it has a positive cash flow of \$130 million.

Local union leaders are pursuing court action to reinstate the retirees' health benefits and have called for a public inquiry into corporate restructuring laws that so badly fail workers and pensioners.

"Why are the workers and the retirees always at the back of the line? The system is tilted against retirees and working people and we need our governments to step up and change that system completely," says Warren. ■

Carolyn Szilva never planned to be an activist. A Woman of Steel who refuses to back down from personal challenges and injustice, she came by her activism honestly.

"I didn't know I was an advocate. I didn't know I was an activist. I didn't have any intentions of becoming either. It just kind of happened," Carolyn wrote recently in an essay submitted with her application to join the USW District 6 Human Rights Committee.

A member of USW Local 2020 in Sudbury, Carolyn is one of 18 remarkable Steelworker activists who have been selected to the new D6 Human Rights Committee.

Carolyn's activism began more than two decades ago, when her youngest of three daughters was diagnosed with leukemia. She discovered that vital cancer treatment services were

not available in her community, which meant families had to make frequent, 800-kilometre round trips to Toronto to access proper care.

Carolyn began advocating for an expansion of cancer care services in Northern Ontario and soon found herself appointed to various committees lobbying government for change. She was part of a sustained campaign that led to significant expansion of cancer care in northern communities – particularly pediatric services – improving the lives of thousands of families.

Carolyn's activist streak would later extend to labour and human rights, when she challenged harassment, bullying and unequal pay in her male-dominated, non-union workplace. She was terminated after filing a human rights complaint against her employer and while she didn't return to the job, her activism led to

improvements in the workplace for other women.

Now working as a psychotherapist at a community counselling centre, Carolyn is the chair of her USW bargaining unit, a member of the Local 2020 Women's Committee and a strong advocate of LGBTQ rights.

Carolyn has been appointed co-chair of the D6 Human Rights Committee, along with another Woman of Steel, Janet Moffat, recording secretary of her Local 9042 bargaining unit at NTN Bearing in Mississauga.

"With leaders like Janet and Carolyn, our Human Rights Committee is ready to move the Steelworkers' equality agenda forward," said District 6 Director Marty Warren.

"The committee will work with our locals and our political and social allies to end discrimination, harassment and inequality in our workplaces and our communities." ■



USW members were front-and-centre at Thunder Bay's pride parade in June and at pride celebrations across District 6 this summer. LGBTQ equality in our workplaces and communities is a key component of the District 6 Human Rights Committee agenda.

A big reason employees seek to join a union is to gain a voice at work. That collective 'voice' leads to improved wages and working conditions even in difficult economic times. Congratulations to our courageous members and hard-working staff on these recent collective agreements negotiated in our district.



Expansion optimistic for more jobs at Morbern

USW members at Morbern in Cornwall settled a short strike this spring with a new three-year contract with wage increases of 2%, 2% and 2.5%. The deal includes a drug card, increased vision care, new language addressing mental health in the workplace and a letter of understanding on a future USW pension plan. The 230 members manufacture decorative vinyl upholstery fabrics. Morbern is planning a \$9-million expansion that members hope will create 60 new jobs within the unit.



More flexibility and wage adjustments at Maxville Manor

A three-year agreement covering 132 workers at Maxville Manor includes wage adjustments within job categories in addition to increases of 1.5% and 1.3% and an increase to be determined based on sector trends. Members at the long-term care residence have an additional union steward, a provision to use half of vacation time as individual days, access to a sixth week of vacation two years sooner, temporary transfers to higher-wage jobs paid at the higher rate, the right to give away a shift within each four-week schedule and new workplace mental health language.



First agreement for Entec

A three-year first agreement for 70 members at Entec in Saint John, N.B., provides an immediate wage increase of \$1.10 per hour, with additional increases every six months until employees reach the top rate. Overall wage rates will increase by 2% in each of the contract's second and third years. The employees, who assemble natural gas boilers for industrial and residential heating, negotiated improved health benefits, vacation entitlement, shift premiums and overtime provisions.



Retroactive wage increases for Metro

A six-year agreement for 85 Steelworkers at a Metro grocery store in Sarnia provides wage increases retroactive to 2015. Part-time employees have maintained their retirement benefits and will receive pension improvements to their defined-benefit plan. Full-time employees will receive \$1.50/hour in increased wages over the contract's term. Part-time employees will receive wage increases varying by length of service.



Seniority plays a role in case of layoffs at Sydney Credit Union

Forty members at Sydney Credit Union in Nova Scotia have stronger, clearer language around bumping during layoffs in their three-year contract. In a layoff situation, members can now bump within their category before bumping full-time positions within another job category.



Three-year deal with 9% increases at Vale

Mine and mill workers at Vale in Voisey's Bay in Labrador have reached a three-year agreement with increases of 9% over the term for the 300 members. Members successfully fought back concessions from the company and maintained their cost-of-living allowance.



Three-year contract at Reliance Home Comfort

The 19 members working at Reliance Home Comfort in Sudbury, a home heating and air conditioning company, have negotiated a three-year agreement with increases of 3%, 2% and 2%. Language adjustments sought by the members were also achieved in the deal.



Signing bonus at OLG Slots

A three-year agreement at OLG Slots in Sudbury provides for a 1.75% increase in the first year and a \$2,500 signing bonus for the 25 members. The negotiating team was successful in improving contract language.



Increases of 2% a year at Tank Truck Transport

A three-year deal for 29 drivers at Tank Truck Transport in Sudbury provides for a 2% increase in each year of the deal across all classifications in addition to language improvements. ■

Incident at Work? *Tell Us About it*

Health Care Council project calls for input

Has this happened to you? You're in bargaining and try to make headway on a common complaint and the employer asks for proof that the situation even exists.

Insufficient staffing can lead to anxiety for residents, resident falls and injuries to residents and staff, Audra says. When a resident gets upset, this can trigger aggressive

Share your situation: D6 Health Care Council collecting evidence of short staffing problems.

Members of the USW District 6 Health Care Council uncovered a common frustration at their meetings: staff shortages. The council represents 1,700 USW members working in retirement homes, hospitals and long-term care facilities.

Short staffing forces workers to rush through daily requirements of their jobs, says Council President Audra Nixon, a USW Local 9211 executive member and a Personal Support Worker (PSW) at Maxville Manor east of Ottawa.

behaviour or agitation for other residents. Without enough staff, these situations are more frequent.

Employers wishing to add staff are constrained by federal and provincial funding that hasn't kept pace. In addition, long-term care minimum standards haven't changed in 20 years.

When incidents happen at work, staff feel frustrated and helpless. Frustrations are compounded during bargaining when employers ask for evidence that short staffing is a problem.

The District 6 Health Care Council's incident reporting project aims to change that. Workers can now report incidents through the health care council website. The goal is to build evidence of short-staffing issues, to support the union in bargaining, arbitrations and political action for better funding and care standards.

Audra encourages USW members in health care to use the site to share their experiences.

"Now we have a place to go, where our members know they'll be heard."

Members must also report incidents to their employer. USW union reps are on hand to assist with the reporting process.

The USW project will not divulge specific incidents, but will collect aggregate data on common occurrences to support the goal of positive change.

The project offers a productive outlet to USW members who shouldn't have to cope silently with guilt and frustration, Audra says. Instead, they can contribute to future improvements in care and working conditions. ■

www.usw.ca/healthcare



'We Need a Union'

Organizing young miners in Long Harbour, N.L. and Kirkland Lake, Ont.

Hundreds of young, non-union mining workers are turning to the Steelworkers to help secure better working conditions, safety, fairness and a real voice on the job.

Initially attracted by above-average wages, these workers are recognizing that without a union, they are powerless to address serious concerns, says Pascal Boucher, a USW

and safety, working conditions, discipline – even their wages and bonuses. They know if they speak up, they're risking their jobs. They've seen co-workers fired without representation or due process.

"One worker said, 'it's like being on probation for life. That's why we need a union.'"

Similar concerns have spawned a union organizing campaign at a

to the job than wages – health and safety is a real issue," Zakhour says.

"These workers are learning that employees at all other Vale operations in the country are Steelworkers. They see how the USW stands up for workers and protects their rights and working conditions every day."

As the organizing campaigns progress, Steelworkers also



Steelworkers (left to right) Mike Scott, Pascal Boucher and Myles Sullivan prepare for leafleting outside Kirkland Lake Gold operations. KL Gold attempted to block the leafleting, but the USW won a settlement at the Ontario Labour Relations Board, with the company recognizing it can't interfere with such union organizing rights.

organizer in the northern Ontario community of Kirkland Lake.

"They're mostly young workers looking for a job that pays a decent wage. But before long they realize they have no real say in what happens to them at work," Boucher says of employees trying to organize a union at Kirkland Lake Gold, which has a workforce of about 800.

"They're in a dangerous job and they're at the employer's mercy when it comes to health

new refinery operated by mining giant Vale in Long Harbour, N.L., a tiny community about 115 kilometres west of St. John's.

Young workers account for much of the 350-strong workforce, says Amanda Zakhour, a USW Next Generation activist assigned to the Long Harbour organizing campaign.

"Young people from all over Newfoundland come here because jobs with these wages are hard to find. But they discover there's more

are making their mark with community-building efforts.

In Kirkland Lake, the union co-sponsored a major hockey tournament last winter and helped organize the community's first Day of Mourning ceremony, which will now be an annual event. The union also is working on a campaign to refurbish and maintain the Kirkland Lake Miners' Memorial, a community landmark commemorating miners killed on the job. ■



Building A C

USW Health and Clinic for Victims of McIntyre

A special clinic attracting scores of retired miners, widows and family members demonstrates a continuing injustice against workers suffering health effects from the decades-long use of aluminum powder in Ontario mines.

"This injustice must be corrected," USW District 6 Director Marty Warren said following the successful two-day intake clinic in Timmins. Former miners and survivors of deceased workers came from as far away as British Columbia, the Yukon and Newfoundland and Labrador. Between 1943 and 1979, miners and other industrial workers were required to inhale McIntyre Powder – based on a theory eventually proved false, that it protected their lungs from silica dust exposure.

"These workers were treated like human guinea pigs," Warren said. "Everyone came with a story about how the aluminum exposure, forced into workers' lungs in

closed rooms, affected breathing, overall health and life expectancy. And all of this with no compensation.

"Our aim is to prove that this practice is deserving of compensation through Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)," said Warren.



A clinic volunteer works with a former miner at the McIntyre Powder Intake Clinic in Timmins.



Danny Haway (middle) with two former McIntyre miners who remembered working with his late dad.

Clinic Connections

Danny Haway recalls how his dad would come home coughing up black dust and could never get the stains out of his fingers, hands, face or neck.

Danny's father was the man who made McIntyre Powder, spending four months a year grinding aluminum pellets into a fine black dust in the confines of a small room. Danny also worked at McIntyre Mine and came to the Timmins clinic to register himself and his late father.

At the clinic Danny was introduced to former McIntyre Mine workers who knew his dad. District 6 Health, Safety and Environment Coordinator Sylvia Boyce made the connection after the former miners said they had worked with the guy who made the powder. The USW's intake clinics are a place for shared stories and connections as well as collecting data. ■

Case for Compensation

Safety McIntyre Powder

Many of the workers exposed to the powder have died or are incapacitated with health problems. Survivors, spouses and their caregivers were invited to participate in the intake clinic that collected information about workers' health, work history, workplace exposures and memories of their experiences with McIntyre Powder.

"This injustice must be corrected."

– Marty Warren, USW District 6 Director

The clinics began after Janice Martell contacted the Steelworkers on behalf of her father, a former miner who suffers from Parkinson's disease. She tried to file a WSIB claim on his behalf, but withdrew the application once she realized his claim would be unsuccessful. Wanting to learn more about health effects experienced by miners exposed to McIntyre Powder, the USW organized intake clinics along with the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW), the Office of the Worker Advisor (OWA), local unions across Northern Ontario and volunteers.

The Steelworkers have a track record of building cases for compensation by collecting workers' health experiences and medical conditions. The clinic saw 150 participants, whose history and health issues were recorded, with compensation claims initiated for many.

A second McIntyre Powder intake clinic will be held Oct. 3-4 in Sudbury at the Steelworkers' Hall at 66 Brady Street.

If you or someone you know is a former miner and would like to join the voluntary registry, learn more at www.mcintyrepowderproject.com. ■



Building Skills, Empowering Activists

USW District 6 WSIB Symposium

District 6 health and safety activists have more power in their toolkits after an intensive two-day symposium on the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) the USW held in Hamilton in May.

Unions and injured workers and their allies continue to mobilize for changes to the complex WSIB system and USW District 6 is building a network of advocates to share knowledge and resources to help workers get the compensation they deserve.

The symposium provided an orientation to the services and programs offered by locals, area councils and the district – resources advocates can use when helping injured workers with WSIB claims and appeals. Delegates heard from experts, gained expertise on how to navigate the complex appeals process, learned about changing WSIB policies and most importantly, made connections with each other. ■

Being Great Neighbours

Members of USW District 6 continue to build on our tradition of giving back to our communities. Share your story of USW volunteering in your community at www.usw.ca/uswcares.

Family Education Day in Southwestern Ontario



Local 9329 put on a USW Family Education Day for members and the community in Woodslee, Ont., near Windsor. Together with Country Village Homes, USW members worked on a community build project for the seniors.

Community Partner: Hamilton Steelworkers Area Council



They did it again! With its 2016 edition of the Rick Woods Memorial Golf Tournament, the Hamilton Steelworkers Area Council matched its 2015 tally by raising \$10,000 for Hamilton FoodShare. Now a regular event that kicks off the charity's summer campaign, the tournament has raised over \$260,000 since it began in 2003 in memory of USW Local 5328 member and activist Rick Woods.

Across town, USW volunteers were flipping burgers and making hotdogs for the Lucy Day Park community picnic, another example of the area council's community involvement.

In August, the area council ramped up its annual backpacks for kids drive, getting together with local businesses and St. Matthew's House to provide backpacks full of food and school supplies for inner city children returning to school. The annual program expects to provide 1,000 backpacks this year.

Filling Plates for Food Banks



Local 14241 in Niagara Falls participated in Food Banks Canada's Every Plate Full campaign in May to raise donations for their local food bank, Project SHARE of Niagara Falls. The team collected 237 pounds of food and made a \$500 donation.

Women of Steel Building Community

Ten Women of Steel were on the job site helping build new homes for those in need in September. Habitat for Humanity's Women Build is an opportunity for women to get involved in the hammers-and-nails of homebuilding. The Women of Steel Committee sees the Women Build project as a great way to promote

community spirit and get active as Women of Steel. Usually volunteers taking part in Habitat for Humanity's Women Build wear pink hardhats. But Women of Steel didn't want to wear pink. So they designed their own hardhats and found a made-in-Canada supplier through one of the units where USW members work. And the employer offered to donate them to support the Women of Steel team.

These Women of Steel are raising funds in addition to their in-kind labour. USW members and locals can support the Women of Steel Women Build project at www.bit.ly/womenofsteel-womenbuild.

Saving Lives and Keeping Work Safe

Chris Carpenter, from Local 16506, received the Smiths Excellence Award for his outstanding contribution to communities in Hamilton and Halton. Chris, who works

at John Crane Canada, a division of Smiths Group, provides life-saving instruction to high school students through the USW New Worker Awareness Program. The award recognized innovation in a racking system devised and implemented by Chris and other Local 16506 members.

Contribution for Medical Equipment Recognized

In 2016, a USW member from each district was recognized with a Jefferson Award from the U.S. foundation dedicated to celebrating public service. The District 6 recipient is Rick Bertrand, President of Local 6500 in Sudbury, which donated \$65,000 to the Sam Bruno Scanner Fund to help purchase a PET scanner to improve clinical oncology services in the community. The Local 6500 donation is the largest contribution to the PET scanner fundraising campaign since it began in 2010.



Rock-In for Improved Care

A giant rocking chair appeared in 19 Ontario communities this June to demand improved long-term care services. The 10-foot tall wooden rocking chair made news across the province as it showed up outside long-term care residences to highlight the urgent need for minimum care standards for residents, improved access and reduced wait times for care. Organized by the Ontario Health Coalition, Steelworkers joined the tour in several communities. The coalition collected postcards during the tour to represent the 20,000 people waiting for long-term care placements. ■

USW Local 5795 members and supporters demonstrate to oppose job cuts at Rio Tinto's IOC operations in Labrador City.



Confronting Challenges

USW Local 5795 looks to mend 'fractured relationship' at IOC

In a recent visit to Labrador City, USW District 6 Director Marty Warren praised the solidarity and resilience of Steelworkers Local 5795 members attempting to mend a 'fractured relationship' with the Iron Ore Company of Canada.

"I'm proud to see this local's commitment to try to move forward and improve this fractured relationship, despite all the challenges they've faced," Warren said after meeting with Local 5795 and IOC officials.

"When there are 3,500 unresolved grievances and serious problems ranging from contracting out, excessive overtime and disciplinary issues, it's impressive to see the local working so hard to overcome these challenges."

The largest USW bargaining unit in Atlantic Canada, Local 5795 represents nearly 1,300 workers at the IOC operations, owned by mining giant Rio Tinto.

The local's commitment to improve labour relations included a recently negotiated agreement to create a short-term, temporary workforce of unionized employees to replace outside contractors at the mine.

"There has been a lack of trust with the company for a long time," said Local 5795 President Ron Thomas. "There are a lot of problems that need to be fixed. It takes both sides to make things work and we're willing to do our part."

U.S. Company Still Interested in Wabush Mines

In the town of Wabush, adjacent to Labrador City, an American company remains interested in buying the Wabush Mines operations that were closed in 2014 by Cliffs Natural Resources.

Nearly 500 workers, most represented by USW Local 6285, lost their jobs when Wabush Mines closed. After Cliffs filed for bankruptcy protection, hundreds of retirees lost medical benefits and their pensions were cut by 25%.

Virginia-based ERP Compliant Fuels made a bid to buy Wabush Mines but withdrew its offer earlier this year. ERP is now considering a new offer, said Tony DePaulo, Assistant to the USW District 6 Director.

"There is no concrete proposal yet, but we're hoping something will come together because Wabush Mines is so important to the community," said DePaulo, who met recently with ERP President Tom Clarke and federal, provincial and municipal government officials. ■