

# Unite

A Newsletter for United Steelworkers in District 3 – Western Canada and the Territories

UNITED STEELWORKERS  
**USW**  
DISTRICT 3

MAY 2022



## Passing of Keith Murphy from USW 1944

Local Union 1944 is heartbroken to announce the death of Brother Keith Murphy, who was killed on the job in a workplace accident in the early hours of April 12, 2022.

Brother Murphy worked as an Access Technician for Telus since 2015 and was a member of Unit 4 in the Kootenay region of Eastern British Columbia. Keith was 31 years old.

USW District 3 extends our thoughts and heartfelt condolences to Keith's family and the local union.

## USW 2009 members locked out by UFCW 1518

Any time an employer locks out their employees, we know we are in for a fight.

Since April 8, 2022, USW 2009 has two of its units locked out by their employer. Even worse news is their employer is a union – UFCW 1518 in British Columbia.

This anti-worker tactic not only threatens the service that UFCW representatives and administrative staff provide to tens of thousands of UFCW 1518 members, but it sets a concerning precedent for corporate employers who want to bulldoze their staff into taking concessions and signing a two-tiered collective agreement.

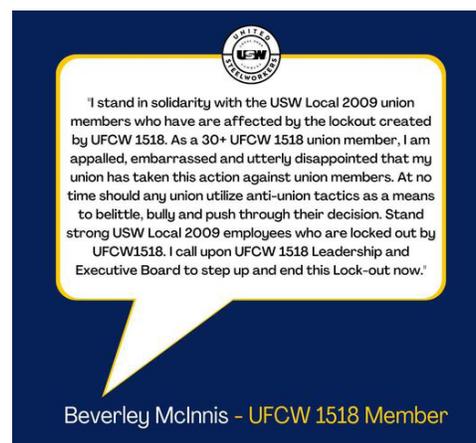
For two years USW 2009 has tried to bargain a fair collective agreement

for the staff of UFCW 1518. Instead, UFCW 1518 unilaterally reduced health & wellness benefits, which are trust-funded, for both current staff and retirees. They have refused requests to bring the benefits carrier to the table, yet proposed an unfair two-tier benefits package. Then they forced a Last Offer Vote (which was 100% rejected), and threatened a “Paccar” lockout to try to get their way.

**Please help end the lockout.**

Visit [1518lockout.ca](http://1518lockout.ca) and sign the petition to send a message to UFCW 1518 leadership.

You can also send messages of support through the USW 2009 Facebook Page [fb.me/usw2009](https://fb.me/usw2009).



Beverley McInnis – UFCW 1518 Member

## Important dates May 2022

Asian Heritage Month  
Jewish Heritage Month

- May 1** International Workers' Day / May Day
- May 2** Eid al Fitr (Ramadan ends)
- May 8** Mother's Day
- May 9** 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Westray mine explosion
- May 17** International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia
- May 22** 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the United Steelworkers
- May 23** Victoria Day
- May 24** Building Inclusive Locals:  
+ 25 Reconciliation virtual workshops



# 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Lakeland Mills explosion

Ten years ago, on April 23, 2012, two dozen workers were on shift at the Lakeland Mills sawmill in Prince George, B.C., when a fatal explosion and fire ripped through the mill. Two workers, Alan Little and Glenn Roche, were killed, while 22 others were left injured.

“It’s hard to believe it has been ten years since the tragic explosion at Lakeland Mills that claimed the lives of two workers and injured and scarred so many others for their lifetime,” said Brian O’Rourke, USW Local 1-2017 President. “The Lakeland Mills explosion and the Babine Forest Products explosion a few months prior are two dates that will remain stained in my memory forever.”

“Today, we remember the lives lost and those injured in this fatal incident. Our thoughts are with the families, friends and Steelworkers on this very difficult anniversary,” said Scott Lunny, USW District 3 Director.

Lakeland Mills was warned about the risk of an explosion caused by sawdust just 11 days before the April 2012 blast. According to an investigation that followed, the sawdust buildup was a direct result of management ignoring workers’ concerns and a decline in the cleanliness of the mill.

“What happened at Lakeland Mills was a tragedy that could have been prevented,” said Lunny. “Since the tragic explosions, the United Steelworkers union has called for governments to improve safety in the wood processing industry and to make sure workplace fatalities are investigated with a criminal lens and prosecuted under the Westray Law.”

“Our efforts are working, but as long as employers continue to get away with seeing workers’ lives as expendable and simply a cost of doing business, our fight to protect workers will continue,” said Lunny.

In 2019, the B.C. Ministry of Labour contracted Vancouver lawyer Lisa Helps to review the actions by WorkSafeBC and the provincial government concerning worker safety. Helps released her report later that year, making 11 recommendations to strengthen worker safety, ensure a criminal lens is applied to workplace fatalities and put workers back at the centre of WorkSafeBC.

“We can’t afford not to take action when workers continue to be killed across our province,” said Ed Kent, USW District 3 Health, Safety and Environment Coordinator. “It’s been over two years since Lisa Helps made recommendations. It’s time for the B.C. government to implement her recommendations by creating ongoing training for police officers and Crown counsel when conducting workplace criminal investigations. We also need WorkSafeBC to get on with their combustible dust regulation review to ensure tragic incidents, such as the Lakeland sawmill explosion, never happen again.”



Photo: City of Prince George Firefighters fight the Lakeland Mills fire on April 24, 2012. Citizen photo by Brent Braaten.

## Day of Mourning 2022

For the third year in a row, we include in our remembrances the many workers who have died because of the pandemic. Too many “essential” workers were placed in dangerous circumstances by employers who were not following basic health and safety principals and instead allowed the virus to spread. These were wholly preventable deaths. Governments and employers alike failed workers with their total lack of preparedness and poor management of the pandemic.

The Day of Mourning is deeply relevant as we continue to see an unacceptable level of workplace fatalities, injuries and disease. We see a disturbing trend across the country by anti-worker governments who

gut health and safety regulations. We know this will only lead to more carnage, which is why we continue our fierce opposition to such regressive policies. A prime example are the changes that stripped away workers’ safety rights through the Ensuring Safety and Cutting Red Tape Act in Alberta.

We must continue our work to strengthen health and safety provisions through collective bargaining to ensure workers are protected from governments who put employers ahead of workers.

Every day, the USW is pushing for better health and safety legislation and stronger enforcement. Our union and our many activists will face every

challenge head-on. We will continue our Stop the Killing, Enforce the Law campaign until every negligent and uncaring employer knows that killing a worker could land them in jail. We are continuing our efforts to make law enforcement and the justice system aware of the Westray Law and why and how they need to apply it.

Read the full statement at [usw.to/42P](https://usw.to/42P).



## B.C.'s single-step certification will protect workers' rights to unionize

The USW has been calling on the BC NDP government to follow through with their commitment to bring back single-step certification. Minister of Labour, Harry Bains, recently announced that joining a union will become easier for workers in B.C.

Under the new amendments:

- If 55% or more of employees in a workplace sign union cards, a union will be certified and no further vote is required.
- If between 45% and 55% of employees sign union cards, a second step consisting of a secret ballot vote is required for certification.

"Single-step certification is crucial in protecting our right to unionize without employer intimidation. This is a win for all workers, but especially for the essential and front-line workers who have been fighting to be treated and paid fairly throughout this pandemic," said Izzy Adachi, former USW 2009 member and organizer at Starbucks Victoria, B.C.

During 1973-1984 and 1993-2001, when the single-step certification system was in place, B.C. had higher union certification rates.



## District 3 delegates attend USW International Mining conference in Salt Lake

Members from USW District 3 attended the first-ever USW International Mining Conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. Director Scott Lunny was also in attendance and addressed conference delegates.

Participating from District 3 were Tyler Fitzpatrick, Scott Clements, Warren Luky, Melanie McConnell, Iain Thistlethwaite, Brian O'Rourke, Del Paré, Adam Connell and Julia McKay. Attending the conference virtually were Jason Arnold, Shaleen Lyan, Scott Eastman and Jason Prokopchuk.

Patrick Rodrigues, USW District 3 researcher, facilitated a session on automation and new technology in mining.



## Federal budget answers Steelworkers' call to defend Canadian jobs

The USW is celebrating an important victory for workers that was included in the federal budget.

For years, as part of the fight to defend Canadian jobs, USW has led the way in calling for important changes to trade laws in Canada. With the federal budget – and subsequent confirmation from the Department of Finance – the government has answered these calls with commitments that include stronger defences against circumvention of duties imposed by Canada, better consideration of worker impact in trade cases and the opportunity for labour unions to file trade remedy complaints independently.

"Over several years USW members showed first-hand the impact of unfair trade on their work and communities," said USW National Director Marty Warren. "The years of participation in trade cases by our local union members were key to moving these reforms forward."

The budget document itself announced the government's intention to "introduce amendments to the Special Import

Measures Act and the Canadian Trade Tribunal Act to strengthen Canada's trade remedy system by better ensuring unfairly traded goods are subject to duties, and increasing participation of workers."

Canada will also finally join other trading partners, notably the United States, that have long allowed trade unions to file anti-dumping and countervailing duty cases to protect domestic jobs. Changes in 2017 to Canada's trade remedy legislation (the Special Import Measures Act) permitted trade unions to participate in trade cases but only with the co-operation of their employers.

"I want to again thank all USW local union members and leaders who have participated in trade cases for years to make this happen," said Warren. "We will continue to work with the federal government to ensure that the commitments they've made, quickly become law. Once implemented, these changes will give Canada some of the most progressive trade law in the world."

# D3 Quick Snaps



District 3 members attended the Leadership Development Scholarship program at Linden Hall in Pennsylvania.

Top row (L-R): Jimmy Dhaliwal, Deepak Kullar, Ashok Tripathi, Aman Chumber. Bottom row (L-R): Scott Trenaman, Jodi Kawinsky, Maddi Genn, Harliegh Hansen.



After a thrilling USW Hockey Tournament Showcase game in Thompson, Man., the City All Stars defeated the USW All Stars 5-3. Hardest Worker was Alex Head from the USW All Stars and MVP was Goalie Simon Carter from City All Stars.



Director Scott Lunny joins USW Local 2014 President Malik Draz, USW Local 7689 President Jason Prokopchuk, Carla Beck, NDP MLA for Regina Lakeview and Robert Doucette to celebrate Ramadan at the Islamic Association of Saskatchewan in Saskatoon.



USW Local 1944 bargaining committee for ADT by Telus meet in Calgary to put together a bargaining package that respects and values the work of the members. Bargaining dates have been set for June.



Members from UFCW 1518 working at Save-on-Foods stand in support of their union staff representatives, USW 2009 members, who are locked out by their employer, UFCW 1518. Their message is clear: #EndTheLockoutNow.



The Easter Bunny stopped by Local 7884 in Elkford, B.C., and invited all the kids to come down to the union hall for a Easter egg hunt and to have pictures taken. Chocolate bunnies were given away to the first 100 kids who attended. A black light dance party followed the Easter egg hunt.

## Bargaining updates

**Thompson Crisis Centre**  
Local 8223 - Thompson, Man.

Members provide housing and related services to all people experiencing domestic and family violence in Northern Manitoba.

Highlights:

- Three-year contract
- Three additional paid holidays
- 33% wage increase over the three years (20%, 7%, 6%)
- Increase in shift premium
- Increase to employer contribution to pension plan

## Passing of USW 1-1937 member Lonnie Hryhroka

We are heartbroken to learn of the passing of Steelworker Lonnie Hryhroka, 46, from USW Local 1-1937: a heartbreaking and unnecessary loss.

Lonnie worked for Holbrook Dyson Logging Ltd. in Port McNeill, B.C.

On April 13, 2022, Lonnie was seriously injured in a workplace incident. He passed away on April 25 at the North Island Hospital in Campbell River.

The USW sends love and strength to Lonnie's family, loved ones, community and the local union during this difficult time.



**SAVE THE DATE**

**2022**

**USW District 3  
Fall School**

**October 2-7, 2022**

**Kimberley, B.C.**



**Do you have news to share from your local union?**

Send in news, events, bargaining updates and photos to [bbarden@usw.ca](mailto:bbarden@usw.ca)