



Greetings Brothers, Sisters and Siblings,

As we start 2024, your local leadership wants to reach out and let you know what's happening within our bargaining units, union and industry.

Expertech Craft is currently in bargaining and on December 5th, a rally was held in Kingston where negotiations were taking place and over 100 Unifor members from the telecommunications sector from both Ontario and Quebec attended to show their solidarity with the Expertech membership. Samia Hashi, Unifor Ontario Regional Director, highlighted the disparity between Bell Canada's significant profits and its seeming reluctance to address reasonable asks of its workers. "While Bell declares billions in profits, it turns a blind eye to the legitimate wage demands of its workforce, who are the very reason for their success," she said. Roch Leblanc, Unifor Telecommunications Director, conveyed the impact of Bell's employment cuts at Expertech, stating, "In January 2014, there were 1,200 workers here at Expertech - now we have 700." On December 8th, the union filed for conciliation as the company was still demanding concessions and refusing to bargain with both Expertech Craft and Clerical together at the same table.

Bell Canada Craft's current collective agreement is set to expire on November 30th of this year and the union plans on holding a bargaining caucus early in the year. Submitting bargaining proposals and attending any bargaining proposal meetings is a way to have your voice heard beyond just voting for a collective agreement. This will no doubt be a difficult round of bargaining as the erosion of Bell Canada craft work continues. There is currently no overtime averaging agreement in place, meaning that it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that individual members are not exceeding 40 hours per week as per the Canadian Labour Code.

Challenges continue at Bell Technical Solutions on multiple fronts. From ongoing issues with the benefits transition, to multiple payroll issues, your bargaining committee has filed six national policy grievances. Our number one ask for our BTS members is to continue to report any instances of third-party contractors doing aerial drop work within our local to a local steward, chief steward or directly to your local president. This is work that should only be performed by Bell Canada Craft, or Bell Technical Solutions members. There is currently no overtime averaging agreement in place, meaning that it is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that individual members are not exceeding 40 hours per week as per the Canadian Labour Code.

Transervice bargaining has concluded effective February 1st with a 74% ratification so congratulations to our Transervice members.

Within the industry, all of our units are currently feeling the fallout of the CRTC's decision in November, requiring telecommunications providers in Canada allow third party carriers access to the fiber optic network. As a result of this decision, Bell Canada announced the same day that they would be cancelling 1 billion dollars of fiber infrastructure spending for 2024/2025. The company also then filed documents with the Federal Court of Appeal seeking to challenge the CRTC's temporary ruling, and for a stay of the decision pending the outcome of the appeal process. This has resulted in a massive work slowdown in all of our units but your bargaining teams from Bell Craft, Expertech and Bell Technical Solutions have been having regular meetings between the units to come up with a joint strategy.

Our social committee has coordinated 2 successful events this year in both Kingston and Perth with another one upcoming in Cornwall. The committee is always looking for new volunteers. Please reach out to any members of our local executive for details on how to join.