

NEGOTIATIONS

UPDATE ON CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS FOR UFCW LOCAL 401 MEMBERS



October 26, 2023

MAPLE LEAF LETHBRIDGE: IMPORTANT DECISION AHEAD

Throughout the bargaining process, your Negotiating Committee has strived to advance your issues, concerns and demands to the company since negotiations began in the spring of 2022. Since then, your committee has met with the company for over 20 days through traditional bargaining and then later with the assistance of a government-appointed Mediator.

It has always been the goal of your committee to bring the best possible offer back to the membership to vote on. While we have reached agreements on many outstanding issues, we were unable to ultimately reach an agreement on an overall package as the company's monetary offer did not, in your committee's opinion, meet the expectations of the membership, and they were also looking for concessions on two major items in the contract.

Firstly, they were looking to remove the 6th week of vacation. Secondly, they wanted to remove the 37-hour guarantee for all new employees and be able to increase the number of weeks they could reduce the hours for all current employees.

The committee clearly told the company and the Mediator that these concessions could negatively impact the membership and potentially escalate to a labour dispute if not removed.

After the company tabled what they outlined as their best offer, we asked the Mediator to review the document and provide his recommendations on a settlement to the union and the company— **in the QR Code to the right, you will find the Mediators Recommendations and his accompanying settlement.**

Through this process, your committee is pleased to report that the Mediator heard your committee's concerns and issued his recommendations, which included the removal of the reductions to the vacation and 37-hour guarantee. While he couldn't fix or include resolves on all issues, it did address these significant concessions. In addition, the Mediator recommended moving the wage increase from April 2024 forward to the date of ratification, which would mean that if the membership approves this Mediator's recommended settlement, there would be, at a minimum, an immediate \$1.50 increase for all production and non-trades employees going forward, with retro pay going back to the expiration of the contract. This recommendation equates to an immediate increase of 9.3% to the base rate. If an employee has worked all hours since April 1, 2022, the retro pay would equate to approximately—\$2,500 (less statutory deductions).



The Mediator and your Negotiating Committee believe that this Mediator's Recommended Settlement represents the best possible settlement under the current circumstances without a labour dispute. While this Mediator's Recommended

Toll Free: 1-800-252-7975 ♦ Edmonton: 780-452-0362 ♦ Calgary: 403-291-1047 ♦ Red Deer 403-342-0150

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Settlement may not address all the issues of the membership, your committee wanted to highlight some of the improvements:

- \$3 increase over the life of the agreement. (six years – two going backwards and four going forwards)
- Retro pay
- Improved language for Maintenance Wage Survey and increases to Trades rates of \$2.31 retro to January 1, 2023
- Introduction of the new Maple Leaf Pension plan
 - Legacy fund payments to all pre-2015 members
 - Immediate enrollment in new pension plan for all current members
- Increased vision care
- Increased afternoon shift premiums
- Increased boot allowance
- Increased Physiotherapy
- Increased dental and orthodontic coverage
- Improved several job levels
- Improved health and safety language

To give the membership adequate time to review the Mediator's Recommended Settlement, we will give you a few weeks before we hold our ratification votes. During this time, the company has committed to providing employees with an opportunity to meet and speak with pension experts to answer any questions you might have about the change in pension plans and financial planning.

We encourage you to review the document thoroughly and direct any questions to your Union Negotiating Committee members.

Before the votes, we will hold Question and Answer meetings, but don't wait until then to ask any questions you might have. Because you'll need to make a significant decision, we want to give you enough time to review your options and ask any questions.

While your committee understands that the expectations of the membership are high, we felt that it was essential to bring this Mediator's Recommended Settlement back to the membership for you to vote on. There are many improvements and additions to the contract that, if accepted, would provide additional benefits and wages to employees right away. If the membership rejects the Mediator's Recommended Settlement, your Union Negotiating Committee will hold a strike vote in the following weeks.

Question and answer meetings will be held at the Holiday Inn Express (217 41 St S) on Monday, November 20, 2023, at 8:30 am, 1:00 pm and 6:30 pm.

In-person voting will be held at the Holiday Inn Express (217 41 St S) on Tuesday, November 21, 2023, between 8:00 am and 9:30 am and 1:30 pm to 7:00 pm.

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Online voting (for those unable to vote in person) will be conducted between 12:01 am and 2:00 pm on Wednesday, November 22, 2023.

Please note your union utilizes an independent voting company to conduct the online votes, and they require a valid email address to send a ballot and password, too. If you are unsure if the union has your correct email address, please contact the Union office to update your contact information.

This choice is critical, and we encourage everyone to review the information and vote.

In solidarity,

Your UFCW Local 401 Union Negotiating Committee,
Devin Yeager (Spokesperson), Cam Howey (Union Labour Relations Officer),
Numa Castaneda, Antonio Castrodes Jr, Mark Heitman, James Paulson and Carie Swatske.

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