



PEI Federation of Labour Newsletter December 2005 Issue

Current News

□ From April 23 to 28, the CLC Atlantic Region and the Labour College of Canada will be holding a weeklong educational at the Memramcook Institute in St. Joseph, NB. The courses for this year will be Labour Law; Communications et Medias (Francais); Health & Safety - New Strategies for Building Activism and Democracy, Safety and Environment; and Leadership. The Registration fee will be \$750.00 single and \$600.00 shared accommodation. For more information please contact CLC Atlantic Region at (506)858-9350; fax at (506)858-9571 or e-mail at: atlantic@clc-ctc.ca. The deadline for applications is March 29, 2006.

□ Elmer MacFadyen, Minister of Community and Cultural Affairs has asked the Federation to submit 3 names of individuals from our affiliates who would be interested in sitting on the Appeals Board of the WCB. If your local has an interested candidate, please send their name, address, phone number, and email to our office..The deadline for submissions is **Wednesday, February 22, 2006.**

□ The federation is currently preparing its submission to the Employment Standards Review. The government has set March 10th, 2006 as the deadline for a written version of our oral presentation. The federation will do our presentation before the committee on March 30 at 9:00 am. Therefore, If any of our affiliates have any issues they wish us to bring to the Review Committee or if you wish to see what we have so far, please contact our office at 368-3068; fax at 368- 3192 or e-mail at: peifed@pei.aibn.com. The deadline for input will be **Thursday, February 16, 2006.**

□ On Tuesday, February 21, at 9:00 am the Federation will be presenting its annual brief to cabinet. If any of our affiliates have any issues they wish us to bring to the Cabinet or if you wish to see what we have so far, please contact our office at 368-3068; fax at 368-3192 or e-mail at: peifed@pei.aibn.com. The deadline for input will be **Thursday, February 16, 2006.**

□ On Tuesday, January 10, it was announced that the unemployment rate on PEI for December was 10.9% up .3% from November's 10.6%. You currently need 525 hours to qualify for EI on PEI.

❑ On January 04, 2006, the PEI Area Council PSAC will be holding an All Candidates Forum on Labour Issues at 6: 45 PM at the Best Western Charlottetown. A Candidate from each Political Party will be in Attendance. The Moderator will be Heather Brooker National President, National Component, PSAC. Everyone is in invited.

❑ On Tuesday, December 27, it was announced that UPSE recently handed out \$5,500 in financial support to ten Island students pursuing a post-secondary education. Nine students received \$500 each, while Randell Duguid was awarded \$1,000 as this year's recipient of the Laurie Jenkins Memorial Scholarship. UPSE bursaries are awarded to UPSE members or their dependents who are in fulltime attendance at a post-secondary institution.

❑ On Friday, December 23, it was announced that Wal-Mart, has been ordered to pay \$172 million in compensation to workers who were refused lunch breaks. A California court found Wal-Mart broke a state law requiring employers to give staff an unpaid 30-minute lunch break if they worked more than six hours. More than 100,000 Wal-Mart employees in California will be eligible for compensation.

❑ On Thursday, December 22, it was announced that employees of Veterans Affairs Canada in Charlottetown have donated \$114,000 to the United Way, Healthpartners and other Canadian charities as part of the 2005 Government of Canada Workplace Charitable Campaign. The funds are raised through payroll deductions, cash donations, and a number of special events such as bingo, raffles, bake sales and a silent auction.

❑ On Wednesday, December 21, it was announced that the Provincial government will invest approximately \$1.5 million into the Island's regulated early learning and child care sector. According to the investment plan, \$800,000 will be invested in certified educators and special needs assistants through Recruitment and Retention Grants, and \$700,000 in direct grants to licenced day cares for resources and administration and for significant improvements to increase the number of infant spaces in centres. In addition to the direct grants for centres and educators, further funding supports increases to the Child Care Subsidy Program and accountability through the development of a research and reporting framework. The funding is the result of a child care agreement between the province and the federal government signed in November 2005.

❑ On Monday, December 19, it was announced that Wal-Mart has been ordered to compensate a number of former employees, after the Quebec Labour Board ruled that Wal-Mart Canada failed to prove that the closing of its store in Jonquière in April was "real, genuine and definitive" as required under the Quebec Labour Code. 79 of the store's 190 former employees filed for compensation under the labour code. The board will determine the "appropriate remedies" for the former employees later.

- ❑ On Monday, December 19, it was announced that the 2005 Provincial Government Employees' Campaign has raised more than \$110,000 for the United Way. Donations for the campaign were raised through donations; payroll deductions; annual fundraising events (including a kickoff barbeque, a pancake breakfast, a "Dress with a Difference Day, and a 50/50 draw); and a number of special fundraising events organized by staff in various government departments.

- ❑ On Friday, Dec 16, NDP leader Jack Layton became the first Canadian political leader to sign the Workers' Bill of Rights, pledging support for the freedom of workers to form unions and to determine wages and working conditions through collective bargaining without interference by government. The Workers' Bill of Rights was prepared by UFCW Canada (United Food and Commercial Workers Canada) and NUPGE (National Union of Public and General Employees).

- ❑ On Thursday, December 15, it was announced that the over 800 CUPE members in four local unions who work in the Island's health-care system have voted 92.5 % in favour of a new contract with the province. The contract includes: a wage increase of 9.32% over three years, beginning retroactive to April 1, 2004; a new weekend premium improvements to overtime and compassionate leave language; some sick leave recognition for part-time employees; and some progressive language changes regarding same-sex marriage.

- ❑ On Wednesday, December 14, it was announced that The New Brunswick government is making regulatory changes to ensure all former employees of the Nackawic pulp mill will receive pensions. The plan includes provisions to redistribute funds on a pro rata basis to allow all pension plan members to receive a pension. If the private pension plan had been left without any regulatory changes, some plan members would have had no funds in their pension after working several years for the now-bankrupt company.

- ❑ On Friday December 9, The P.E.I. government unveiled its first-ever fall capital plan for the next 5 years. The plan calls for \$248 million in spending on roads, schools, hospitals and other programs and is based on projected revenues with an expected 2% growth for each of the next five years. Out of the \$248 million, \$147 million will be spent on highway improvements and provincially owned buildings, \$20 million will be spent on the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, \$8.5-million will be used to replace aging school buses, \$5 million will be used for information technology at the Provincial Treasury, \$2.4 million will be spent for clinical information systems in health and \$14-million will be spent to build a new Montague Regional High School.

- ❑ On Thursday December 8, Ontario passed new legislation that will eliminate mandatory retirement at the age of 65. The law will amend the province's Human Rights Code to

extend protection against discrimination on the basis of age to people 65 and older. But once someone turns 65, it's up to the employer whether to continue offering benefits such as dental and health-care coverages. The law will go into effect in about a year in order for business and labour to make whatever adjustments are necessary to comply with the legislation. Other provinces and territories that have banned mandatory retirement include P.E.I., Manitoba, Quebec, Alberta, the Yukon and Northwest Territories. It's expected that less than two per cent of Ontario's 1.5 million people 65 and over would continue to work.

□ On Wednesday, December 7, it was announced that P.E.I. will become the first province in Atlantic Canada to follow the United States in adding an extra month to daylight saving time. The change will take place in March 2007, with Islanders moving their clocks ahead one hour three weeks earlier in March and rolling them back one week later in November. Quebec and Ontario have also decided to adopt the new window for daylight saving time.

□ On Tuesday, December 6, ceremonies were held in Charlottetown and Summerside in conjunction with the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women. At the Charlottetown ceremony, 23 white candles were lit in memory of the 14 women killed On December 6, 1989 at the Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal and the 8 Island women murdered since 1989 and one candle was lit for peace on Earth. Federation VP (Women) Linda Dockendorff lit a candle on behalf of the federation and the Federation's executive Council set aside time from their annual action plan meeting to attend this important and moving ceremony.

□ On Thursday, December 2, the final report from a special legislative committee appointed by Premier Pat Binns to investigate the pros and cons of banning Genetically Modified Organisms was tabled. The report stated that the committee did not see any economic advantage to banning the GMOs. Instead, two of its eight recommendations focussed on labelling. The committee wants P.E.I. to support the use of labels on GMO products and to work with the federal government to develop international standards for those labels.

Highlights of the Federation's Annual Planning Meeting for 2006

□ On Tuesday, December 6, 2005 at the Inn on The Hill in Charlottetown, the Federation's Executive Council held its annual strategy session to determine our goals for the upcoming year.

Communications

-The Federation will continue to try to improve our Communication capabilities. We will do this by:

- continuing to distribute our newsletter as widely as possible,
- expanding the capacity of our website,
- buying a digital camera so we can add more pictures to our website,
- releasing press releases and letters to politicians as issues warrant,
- and by meeting with affiliated locals to discuss concerns and nonaffiliates to discuss affiliation.

Events

-This year, the Federation is planning to hold:

- educationals in March (Stewart Level 2 and Global Solidarity) and in October (Stewart Level 3 and Mobilizing Membership),
- an event in conjunction with International Women's Day on March 8th,
- in conjunction with the Charlottetown Municipal Elections, the federation will organize a workshop on municipal issues,
- our 5th Annual Day of Mourning Ceremony on April 28th. This year we will also be unveiling the Day of Mourning Monument in conjunction with the ceremony,
- in conjunction with May Day International Day for Workers, the Federation will distribute 10,000 placemats with Health-care as the theme,
- Media and Union Representatives Luncheons in early May and late September,
- workshops in Charlottetown and in Summerside on Lobbying politicians to train affiliate members on how to properly lobby politicians on Labour issues,
- our Annual Labour Day Picnic on September 4. We hope that this year's event will continue to be as successful as the last couple of events,
- in conjunction with International Literacy Day on September 8, we will be once again organizing a donation of books dealing with organized labour and issues of importance to working families to the UPEI and Provincial Libraries,
- in conjunction with the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty on October 17, we will work with other groups to organize a Forum on Poverty,
- and finally, our 42nd Annual convention in early November, 2006.

Political

-Once again, the federation will be presenting our brief to Cabinet and to the Opposition.

-We will also be doing a presentation to the Employment Standards Review in late March.

-Once again we will lobbying MP's on issues to be decided by the CLC in April and Oct.

- and finally this year, we plan to meet more often with the Minister responsible for Labour Elmer MacFadyen.

The Federation Submission on Increasing the Maximum Fine in PEI's OH and S Act

□ On Wednesday, December 7, the Occupational Health and Safety Council held a special meeting to get input from labour and employers on increasing the maximum fine in PEI's Occupational Health and Safety Act. There seemed to be strong support from both the labour and employer representatives in attendance to increasing the fines to \$250,000.

□ Here is the submission the Federation sent in to the Occupational Health and Safety Council on this issue:

-The PEI Federation would like to express its strong support for increasing the maximum fine in PEI's to at least \$500,000 to bring us in line with the rest of Canada. At the very least we would like to see the fine brought up to the level of \$250,000 to coincide with fine levels in most of the Atlantic Region.

-The fine levels in the Act need to be at a level to ensure that the fine is seen in the business community as strong warning that the offence will not be tolerated. It must not appear to be a mere licence fee for illegal activity. This sentiment was echoed in 2003 when the Alberta Government increased its maximum fine from \$150,000 to \$500,000 because it felt **“in order to be an effective deterrent fines must be high enough to be of concern to violators.”**

-It was also echoed by the Ontario Ministry of Labour who in its 2000 policy review found that there was strong evidence in the international literature that orders, citations, and fines did result in decreased frequency and severity of accidents.

-As was seen in the recent workplace death of Wayne Murnaghan here on PEI, the fines levied (a total of \$15,000) were woefully low considering the amount of negligence involved and the tragic loss of life. Fines this low do not act as a deterrent to anyone.

-PEI's current maximum fine of \$50,000, which is the lowest in Canada, is not strong enough especially in our profit driven economy where some companies place production goals and profitability above worker's safety. While we are not trying to paint all companies with the same brush, the federation feels that increasing fines along with a strong commitment from the Provincial government to increase the resources, manpower,

and political will necessary to enforce the Occupational Health and Safety Act will make sure that those companies who don't make worker's safety their top priority think twice about that policy.

-The federation would also like to express its amazement at companies who feel that increasing the fines in the Occupational Health and Safety Act will increase the cost of doing business on PEI. We don't know of anyone who considers increasing the fine for DUI as increasing the cost of driving of car. Increasing fines in the Act will not increase the cost of doing business on PEI, it will only increase the cost of doing business wrong on PEI.

-In conclusion, It is our hope that increasing fines will play a part in ensuring that all companies doing business on PEI treat workplace safety with the utmost importance that it deserves and help them realize that there is no profit in ignoring the safety of their workers.

Yours Sincerely,
Carl Pursey,
President of the PEI Federation of Labour

C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation of Labour Educational

-The C.L.C. Atlantic Region and P.E.I. Federation will be holding a two day educational at the Howard Johnson, Dutch Inn, Charlottetown, P.E.I. on Thursday, March 9, 2006 - 8:30 am - 5:00 pm (Lunch provided). The courses being offered are:

Shop Steward Level 2: Representation Skills and Tools

-This 9 hour second level course builds on the framework of steward skills established in our Level 1 course. The course will focus on representation issues:

- * knowing your membership;
- * working with your union executive, grievance preparation;
- * problem solving, conflict resolution and representation skifts.

Global Solidarity

-Everything seems to be going global. Are you losing ground in a sea of global change? Learn new ways of looking at the world and gain practical instruction in how to make links with workers in other countries. Understand who benefits, who doesn't and why, under the present economic structures, then move to what we need to change. The 9 hour course will be dynamic, fast paced and challenging.

Registration Information

-Please complete the registration form and send it before February 16, 2006 along with a cheque made payable to the P.E.I: Federation of Labour to cover the registration fee (\$35.00 per person which includes lunch) to:

-Marjorie Gyurus, Registrar P.E.I. Federation of Labour, 22 Enman Crescent, Charlottetown, P.E.I. C1E 1E6

If you require additional information, please contact:

Marjorie Gyurus at (902) 368-3068 or email: peifed@pei.aibn.com

or

Jean-Claude Basque at 506-861-7086 or email: jcbasque@clc-ctc.ca

Update on the Day of Mourning Monument

With the final obstacle out of the way the Monument was put in place on Monday, December 19, 2005. With the date of placement of the monument being so close to the Christmas season and with winter now upon us it has been decided to hold off on the dedication ceremony. The ceremony will now take place to coincide with the April 28th, 2006 Day of Mourning Ceremony.

The Federation of Labour would like to thank all of the affiliated and nonaffiliated locals and the CLC who donated to the cause. The support and generosity the Island labour movement has shown this project is deeply appreciated and the federation would like to thank the following unions for their generous donations:

Union
Bricklayers Local 1
Canadian Labour Congress
Canadian Union of Public Employees PEI Division
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 501
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 805
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1145
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1770

Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1779
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 1870
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 2523
Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 3324
Canadian Union of Postal Workers Charlottetown Local
Canadian Union of Postal Workers Summerside Local
Communications, Energy & Paperworkers Union Local 61
Communications, Energy & Paperworkers Union Local 401
International Association of Machinists Local 1934
IATSE Local 906a
International Union of Operating Engineers Local 942
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 1432
PEI Nurse's Union
PEI Teacher's Federation
PEI Union of Public Sector Employees
Public Service Alliance of Canada Area Council
Canadian Employment and Immigration - PSAC Local 90152
Canadian Employment & Immigration - PSAC Local 90153
Canadian Employment and Immigration - PSAC Local 90154
Union of Canadian Transport Employees PSAC Local 60905
Union of Parks Canada PSAC Local 90023
Union of Taxation Employees PSAC Local 90002
Union of Veteran Affairs Employees PSAC Local 90001
United Brotherhood of Carpenters & Joiners of America - Local 1338
United Food and Commercial Workers - Local 864

-Pictures of the monument will be available soon at
<http://www.peifl.ca/pages/dom2/dom.html>

Important Dates

All Candidates Forum on Labour Issues Sponsored by the PEI Area Council PSAC	January 04, 2006	6: 45 PM Best Western Charlottetown, 238 Grafton St. Charlottetown, PEI
Federal Election	January 23, 2006	
Brief to Cabinet	Tuesday, February 21, 2006	At 9:00 am
International Women's Day	Wednesday, March 8, 2006	
CLC Atlantic Region and PEI Federation Educational	Thursday, March 9, 2006	8:30am - 5:00pm Howard Johnson Dutch Inn, Charlottetown
Presentation to Employment Standards Review	Thursday, March 30th, 2006	at 9:00 a.m.
CLC Atlantic Region and Labour College of Canada Weeklong Educational	April 23 to 28, 2006	Memramcook Institute St. Joseph, NB Deadline March 29, 2006
National Day of Mourning for Workers Injured or Killed on the Job	Friday, April 28, 2006	