



February 9, 2017

**Dear UNW Members,**

Welcome to 2017! For many of us at the UNW, 2016 just flew by.

The UNW moved into our new building in February 2016. Finding a new home for the UNW and having the UNW, PSAC, and NTFL under one roof, was first discussed over 10 years ago at an annual Executive Strategic Planning retreat. Now here we are, a force of solidarity, in the new North Star Building.



2016 was a tough year for our biggest bargaining units and we are facing hard bargaining employers who refuse to compromise on anything.

We have to give the GNWT credit for their propaganda. Before bargaining even began, they set the stage by telling everyone that hard times were coming, and there is no money for anything. We have now seen that there IS money – lots of it, in fact! But the Government of the Northwest Territories has determined that infrastructure – *and infrastructure alone* – is where that money is going to be spent. Your bargaining teams want you to know this truth: We aren't opposed to ALL infrastructure spending! We just want the Employer a fair compromise. The workers deserve that much respect.

After all, isn't that what negotiation is all about? Give and take. Discussion. **Compromise.**

It is February 2017, and a new opportunity to start afresh. Let's all come together to support our fellow workers – our friends, our neighbours, our colleagues. Let them know that you can care about them, and you care about future of the Northwest Territories.

What can you do? Understand the issues: read the proposals and communiques on our website, talk to bargaining team members, talk to Local executive members. Stand up for your fellow members in conversation and online. Correct misunderstandings. Send messages of

support to the bargaining teams. Go to Local and Regional meetings. Ask questions. Wear a “I Support My Bargaining Team” or our “Compromise” button. No meetings coming up? Ask your Local for one! Talk to your MLAs – ask them how they personally are going to stand up for the workers.

You may have heard the union phrase “An injury to one is an injury to all.” Well, it works the other way too: ***A victory for one is a victory for all.***

I read somewhere that it is impossible for any one person to agree with everything that an organization does, all the time; and I believe this to be very true. It is human nature for thoughtful individuals to ask question and to form opinions. As a union, we would never ask our members to blindly follow. In fact, I encourage and indeed welcome questions and challenges from the members. I promise you, that as UNW President, I will always be honest and transparent, and I know that the other UNW leaders feel the same way.

Solidarity does not mean herd mentality. It is about being committed to larger ideals and supporting your colleagues even if you are not directly affected by something, even if you may not completely agree with everything. It is about collective action and showing a united front in the face of opposition.

In 2016 and 2017 we have seen people all over North America come together for Idle No More, the Black Lives Matter movement, the Women’s March on Washington. Let us all be inspired by what we have witnessed and move forward in solidarity, as a union, with spirit and moral purpose.

***In solidarity!***



Todd Parsons  
President