

# UNW

## Action Update



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### President's Message

## Hay River a Victory for All Workers

Now that the long and difficult strike by Town of Hay River workers is over, we can all reflect on the meaning of this struggle.

First of all, we must recognize the courage and solidarity of our local members in Hay River. This dispute was not just about money, it was a fight for dignity and respect.



Our members faced an employer determined to break the union, even to the point of bringing in scabs to do struck work. They faced abuse and hostility not only on the picket line, but from a campaign of bullying attacks on a Facebook politics page. Beginning in the depths of winter, they held the line. In the end they won out, achieving a wage settlement very nearly meeting their original demands.

The Hay River settlement was won in the way unions have always achieved their goals. Workers stayed together in solidarity and determination. They refused to buckle and showed the employer they would not be moved.

Negotiations are now underway or beginning with major employers, including the GNWT, NTPC and Dominion Diamonds. These employers have surely been keeping a close eye on events in Hay River.

The lesson for these employers is that UNW Members are strong, united and will fight on for what they deserve. The courage and success of Hay River workers is a big win for all UNW members.

On behalf of all UNW members, I salute our brothers and sisters in Hay River and congratulate them on reaching a fair settlement.

August 2015

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**"The Mission of the Union of Northern Workers is to inspire, engage and empower workers and community through quality education, effective representation, model public service and political action."**

**UNW Members Discounts**

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UNW News

**Hay River Strike a Victory**



Members of the Union of Northern Workers employed by the Town of Hay River have ratified a new collective agreement July 30, ending one of the longest strikes in NWT labour history.

The 3-year agreement expires December 31, 2016 and replaces the previous agreement, which expired December 31, 2013. The new agreement provides for wage increases of 2.0% January 1, 2014; 2.0 % January 1, 2015; and 1.75 % January 1, 2016.

The settlement largely achieves the wage increase demands union members have held for since the 31 Town employees went on strike February 9.

## Contracts and Bargaining

Members at the **Village of Fort Simpson** ratified a new collective agreement May 21. The three-year agreement expires December 31, 2016. The deal provides a wage increase of 2.25 per cent in each year of the agreement, and a 2.25 per cent increase per year to vacation travel and housing allowances. See the [media release](#).

Members employed by the **Town of Fort Smith** ratified a new collective agreement July 20. The four-year agreement expires December 31, 2018. It provides wage increases of 1.50% January 1, 2015; 2.0 % January 1, 2016; and 2.25 % January 1, 2017 and 2018. The new agreement implements a job classification system that will come into effect September 1, 2015, and contains new provisions for stand-by and vacation recall. Letters of Understanding were agreed for the development of an employee assistance program and a working alone policy. See the [media release](#).

Talks to renew the collective agreement with **Dominion Diamond Ekati Corporation** continued May 26, 27, 28. The Union Bargaining Team expected to receive a comprehensive response to their proposals from the bargaining session of March 11, 2015. Talks were suspended on the issue of the statutory freeze on hire points or fly points, with the UNW reserving its right to file a complaint if alterations negatively impact members. The Employer has filed a "Failure to Bargain Complaint" with the Canada Industrial Relations Board. The Union's legal defense of this complaint is underway and a Board decision is awaited. See the [Bargaining Updates page](#) on the UNW website.

Representatives of **GNWT** Locals met in Yellowknife July 21 and 22 for a Bargaining Conference to develop proposals for the upcoming round of negotiations on renewing the GNWT contract.

## Bill 44: Health "Superboard" Act

UNW lobbying paid off by forcing change to parts of the GNWT bill which amalgamates regional health and social services authorities in one "superboard". Amendments addressed UNW concerns that the Bill denied the constitutionally protected right to collect bargaining. Changes also provide for the negotiation of a new collective agreement with Hay River Health and Social Services Authority workers before the board is taken into the "superboard". See the [UNW webpage](#) for details.



**Work is speeding along on the UNW's new headquarters building in Yellowknife. Windows are in, cladding is going on and interior fit up is underway.**

## National News

### Voter Registration for the Federal Election



The federal general election will be held on Monday, October 19, 2015. Canadian citizens at least 18 years old on election day are eligible to vote. Electors need to be registered to vote. Elections Canada says most electors are already registered. To check if you are registered, visit [elections.ca/register](http://elections.ca/register) or call 1-800-463-6868. Electors have many voting options to choose from: they can vote by mail, in person at any Elections Canada office, at advance polls or at their polling station on election day. To vote, electors must show proof of their identity and address. The list of accepted pieces of identification is [available online](#).

### "Go to Work Sick"

During negotiations with the Public Service Alliance of Canada yesterday, federal government negotiators tabled a proposal that would gut the sick leave provisions for employees of the federal public service. If implemented, workers will be forced to choose between going to work sick or losing pay for basic necessities. The proposal would eliminate all accumulated sick leave for federal public servants, reduce the amount of annual sick leave to 37.5 hours a year subject to the absolute discretion of the employer, and institute a 7-day waiting period without pay before people can access short-term disability benefits.

Sign the [national petition](#) opposing the harsh sick leave proposals.

## Training and Events

### Executive Officers Development Training

Beginning September 9, a series of Executive Officers Development Training sessions are being held.

There are two course offerings each for: Presidents and 1st and 2nd VPs; Secretaries and Treasurers; Chief Shop Stewards and Stewards. The courses outline the roles and responsibilities of executive officers and helps them to lead and manage efficient locals that can better service their members.

Topics include: introduction to the UNW; what is a Local?; Local Executive officers roles and responsibilities; holding local meetings; financial administration; communications and conventions. Contact Gayla Thunstrom, 1st VP at [thunstg@unw.ca](mailto:thunstg@unw.ca) or Marie Buchanan, 2nd VP at [buchanm@unw.ca](mailto:buchanm@unw.ca)

## Resources

### Special Projects Funding

September 30 is the deadline for Locals to apply for Special Projects Funding. The once yearly grants of up to \$2,000 fund Locals' priorities to build a strong UNW.

Funding is available for such projects as education of members; improving participation in union functions such as conventions; promoting the UNW as a community partner; and recruiting new members. For more information, see the [Special Projects Funding Policy and Guidelines](#) on the UNW website.

### Big Savings on Members Discounts

The Union of Northern Workers has negotiated partnerships with vendors and suppliers, providing members with major discounts on goods and services.

Thanks to the buying power of a large membership, members benefit. To claim discounts, members must provide proof of UNW membership—only full UNW members are eligible for these deals and discounts. For full information, see the Members Discounts [UNW webpage](#).

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