

UNW Action Update



[Website](#) [Join UNW](#) [Contact Us](#)

[Forward Email](#) | [Email Signup](#)

President's Message

Welcome to *UNW Action Update*

We've launched our bimonthly newsletter to keep UNW Members informed on the work of our union. You'll find the latest news on UNW activities, issues, services and events, as well as news on national labour issues, training and events, and resources for Members and activists.

When there are major developments—such as bargaining updates or strike votes—we'll use this mailing list to send *Special Bulletins* to affected locals or the full mailing list.



Make sure you're signed up to receive *UNW Action Updates* at your home email. We'll rely on *UNW Action Update* to communicate with you away from your workplace. **You need to get your union business emails at home, not at your workplace mailbox!**

Now that *UNW Action Update* has been launched, it's up to Members to subscribe and keep themselves informed on UNW activities. Hit [Forward Email](#) (above in the top bar) to send this newsletter to brothers and sisters so they can subscribe. People who receive the forwarded newsletter should hit [Email Signup](#) to subscribe.

Be assured that the *UNW Action Update* email list is private and confidential, and your contact information will not be shared with anyone.

UNW Action Update is here to serve you, so we need your feedback. Please [email](#) to send your suggestions for more or better content, and any corrections.

I hope you find that *UNW Action Update* meets your information needs and look forward to hearing your comments.

In solidarity,

May 2015

[President's Message](#)

[UNW & NWT News](#)

[National News](#)

[Training and Events](#)

[Resources](#)

"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 Member Discounts](#)

**Mark's Work
Warehouse**

Clothes That Work.

[UNW and NWT News](#)

[Construction Underway on UNW's New Home](#)



Located at 53rd Street next to Mildred Hall School in Yellowknife, the new building overlooks Frame Lake, City Hall and the Legislative Assembly.

The 4-storey, 35,000 square foot office building is scheduled to open by year's end. Construction began in July 2014.

The UNW is owner and developer. The new facility will house the UNW's corporate offices and the offices of Public Service Alliance Canada North and the Northern Territories Federation of Labour. Stantec Ltd. will be the major commercial tenant, occupying a full floor of the building.

The UNW facilities will include training facilities, board and meeting rooms, as well as library, interview and full reception areas. Announcements on the naming of the new building, and updates on construction, will be coming throughout 2015.

The building was designed by Stantec Ltd. Clark Builders is the construction contractor.

Go to the UNW website to see a [gallery of photos](#) on the construction.

Hay River Strike Continues



Unionized workers at the Town of Hay River went on strike February 9.

Negotiators from the Public Service Alliance of Canada were in contract talks from August 2014. Workers voted overwhelmingly in favour of strike action on January 12. Conciliation broke down during the first day January 13.

Two rounds of negotiations to end the dispute collapsed February 25 and April 20. A union offer to refer the dispute to binding arbitration was rejected by the Town on April 28.

Workers are holding out for increases of just over two per cent per year, with the increase rate applied to the housing allowance. The Town began the strike with a zero per cent wage offer. Wages not paid by the Town during the strike have saved the cost of wage increases many times over.

In response to the employer's refusal of binding arbitration, almost \$125,000 in donations was donated by delegates at the PSAC National Convention, throwing

the full support of the national union behind the striking workers.

Town workers remain united and determined to win their demands. See a full history of the dispute on the [UNW website](#).

UNW Opposes Bill 44

The GNWT's Bill 44 proposes to merge all of the NWT's regional health authorities into one "superboard", including the amalgamation of the separate Hay River Health and Social Services Authority into the NWT public service. A presentation stating UNW concerns was made to the Legislative Assembly Committee reviewing the proposed law.

Learn more about Bill 44 and the UNW's position [on our website](#).

Josie Gould Scholarships

The Union of Northern Workers awards ten \$3,000 Josie Gould Memorial Scholarships every year. The scholarships assist UNW members, their children and spouses with the costs of post-secondary education.

Since the creation of the scholarship fund in 2002, \$360,000 in scholarships have been provided to 120 students.

The theme of this year's scholarship essay competition is "What role can youth play in the Union movement, and what can Unions do to motivate youth in Union activism?"

Deadline for applications is June 30. For information, see our [website](#).

Yellowknife Spring Trade Fair



Somba K'e Regional Vice President Alex Lambrecht and Local 9 Vice President Joan Kyup were among the many UNW members staffing the booth and promoting the union at the Yellowknife Spring Trade Fair.

National News

PSAC National Convention

Delegates from across the NWT attended the Public Service Alliance of Canada's national convention April 26 to May 1 in Quebec City. National President Robyn Benson and National Executive Vice President Chris Aylward were re-elected. Delegates debated and passed resolutions on major issues, including: approval of a \$5 million campaign to defend public services and collective bargaining rights; continued lobbying for a nationally-funded child care program; a campaign to oppose contracting-out (including opposition to the Stanton Hospital P3); and, increasing strike pay for workers in the northern territories, to reflect higher costs of living. The convention endorsed the need for a national inquiry on missing and murdered Aboriginal women, and vowed to continue fighting changes to sick leave in the federal public service. See full details on convention proceedings on the [PSAC website](#).



National Attacks on Labour

The Harper Conservatives are continuing their war on labour with two major measures now underway.

Bill C 377, the federal law imposing absurd financial reporting requirements on unions, is going back to the Senate for voting shortly. Even the Tory-dominated called for changes in a bill it said was "poorly written". The law will require unions to disclose vastly more financial information than similar organizations, much more than lobbyists. See the [PSAC website](#) for details.

The government has also confirmed its intention to claw back sick leave provisions, imposing cruel conditions on sick workers and forcing employees to come to work sick.

The latest budget bill authorizes Treasury Board to modify collective agreements to remove sick leave and impose a short and long term disability plan outside of collective agreements. The Bill will circumvent the Public Service Labour Relations Act as well as ongoing negotiations. Overriding bargaining through collective agreements has recently been found unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada.

Days of Action are being organized nationwide on the 19th of each month leading up to the federal elections. See the PSAC website for information on sick leave, and watch for announcements on Days of Action.

The UNW stands in solidarity with federal unions in opposing the attack on sick leave.

Health and Safety Training and Events

New OHS Regulations

New Occupation Health and Safety Regulations for the Northwest Territories are coming into effect June 1.

The regulations were revised with recommendations from Safety Advisory Committee which included representation by labour. The proposed regulations sat on the GNWT minister's desk awaiting approval for so long, labour groups mounted a petition calling for the regs to be adopted.



The new Regulations include significant changes in language and organization. There are new requirements for hazard assessments; supervisor education; radiation; OHS Committees; First Aid and personal protective equipment. Additional protections for electrical workers, health care workers, and firefighters are included.

The new regulations do not change the responsibility of employers to provide safe work places, or change the right of workers to refuse unsafe work.

You can see a fact [sheet](#), [download the new regulations](#) and see detailed information on the NWT-Nunavut Workers Safety and Compensation Commission [website](#).

Training Opportunities

In order to help members grow in their understanding of the Union and the issues it faces, courses have been developed by the Union of Northern Workers, the Public Service Alliance of Canada, and Northern Territories Federation of Labour.

Review the course listings on our [website](#), and contact the [Education Service Officer](#) at UNW headquarters to learn about taking the courses.

The next course offering is Shop Steward Training, May 23 in Yellowknife.

Resources

New Website Launched

The [UNW website](#) has been completely revised and updated.

The website emphasis is on member services. There are prominent headings for finding collective agreements and information on locals, for signing up members and on where to turn when there's trouble at work. The latest news is featured front and centre, with upcoming events and training opportunities highlighted.

In all, the site is designed to make it easier for members to know about and take part in their union, and for our partners and the general public to learn about our organization and its achievements.

Take a look at the new website, and [tell us](#) what you think.

Election Year Resources

Federal and territorial elections, and votes in NWT cities, towns, villages and some hamlets are all taking place in 2015. Labour interests will benefit big by getting rid of the Harper Conservatives, and electing labour-friendly leaders at the federal, territorial and municipal level.

See the UNW website for [activist resources](#), an [election issues flash sheet](#) and watch future editions of *UNW Action Update* for election news.

Contact Us

#200 - 5112 - 52nd Street
Yellowknife, NT X1A 3Z5
UNW.CA

Toll free: 1-877-906-4447
Ph: 867-873-5668
Fax: 867-920-4448

