

Unifor opens Negotiations with Ontario Northland

Sisters and brothers,

Unifor Local 103 opened negotiations with Ontario Northland (ONTC) last week (September 29th and 30th, 2014) in North Bay, Ontario. Local 103 has five collective agreements with ONTC covering clerical, on-board, clerks, yard office, stores, mechanical and hotel staff.

Assistant to Unifor President, Bob Orr joined the Local 103 Master Bargaining Committee and National Staff at the opening meeting. We impressed upon the ONTC the importance of a meaningful dialogue with the Ontario Premier Wynne, Minister of Northern Development and Mine along with Minister of Transportation and the ONTC concerning Ontario Northland's participation in the development of the infrastructure to the 'Ring of Fire' along with the importance of finalizing a strategic alliance with Metrolinx. The province has committed to providing capital funding to enhance the North Bay rail shops' ability to attract locomotive, freight and passenger car refurbishment work from the industry and we also want to see that commitment materialize as part of this round of negotiations.

Without question this round of negotiations will have a number of complexities to it as a result of two plus years of uncertainty caused by the Ontario government's March 23, 2012 announcement to sell off or shut down the ONTC. Ontario Premier Wynne brought that process to an end in March 2014 announcing that the government will retain ownership of the rail, motor coach and hotel operations. It is important to maintain full solidarity as we move through this critical round of negotiations.

The bargaining committee has offered ONTC future bargaining dates for consideration and in the meantime, it was agreed that each individual bargaining unit meet with the respective department with the purpose of resolving all outstanding grievances.

In solidarity,

Unifor Local 103 Master Bargaining Committee

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