

Taxing TIMES

April 9, 2009



A newsletter for OPSEU members working for the Ministry of Finance • Issue #6

Welcome back to Taxing Times

Even before the employer has dealt with the human cost of divesting the corporations tax act to the Federal government, we are faced again with a further divestment of the Retail Sales Tax through Harmonization with the Goods and Services Tax. In a futile attempt to appease business interests, the government is negotiating to transfer our work to the federal government and increase the taxes that middle class Ontarians will pay.

Changes in the MERC Team.

At the 2008 Divisional Meeting the new MERC team was elected. Lorne Woodhouse (Co-Chair), Moira Cowan (Vice Chair) and Art Slade (Co-Chair Ministry Health and Safety Advisory) is that team. We express a warm and heartfelt thank you to Karrie Ouchas, past Co-Chair for the time she spent on the MERC.

With the changes to the MERC, we have adjusted the CTAR/OCCS working group. This team has gone through a lot of changes over the past few years.

The current team is:

- Lorne Woodhouse (Co-Chair MERC)
- Moira Cowan (MERC Member)
- Art Slade (MERC Member)
- Betty Marchegiano (Employee Rep)
- Marg Simmons (Job Security Officer, OPSEU Staff Representative)

With the conclusion of bargaining, the CTAR/OCCS group has returned to the table with the employer. A joint update will be coming from the employer, but in the meantime, we are working with the new collective agreement and the new language and how it applies to our impacted members. As an early communication tool available to those who like Facebook, we have created a page:

<http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=66033025898&ref=mf>

RST Announcement

Your Ministry Enforcement and Renewal Committee is already enquiring of our management team to find out what their plans are for you, the working people in the Ministry. What plans do they have to ensure you have a job on July 1, 2010? Where will you be working once harmonization has taken place, and what will be your rate of pay? What will happen with your pension, benefits and seniority? Our priority is you, the members. We want to make sure that you have a job to go to, work to be proud of, and the ability to care for your family in the manor you always have. Over the next 15 months we will be meeting with the employer to make sure that they live up to their obligations to you and in particular live up to the collective agreement that we have with the employer.

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What the future holds is uncertain for many of us. This is going to be a stressful time for many of us affected by this decision. As we get answers for you, we will communicate them to you as quickly as possible. **Taxing Times** will again be published to make sure that you have the information that you need and deserve as soon as possible. We don't have all the answers, yet. Your union will remain at the table to make sure that the employer is aware of your issues and your concerns. Please let us know if you have any issues that need to be dealt with in this process.

We are also working with OPSEU Head Office to deal with the budget announcement. While we work our way through the budget, feel free to add your comments to our Facebook page. We will be seeking your help and input in creating the campaign that you want us to run. You can also check out OPSEU's press release relating to the harmonization.

<http://www.opseu.org/news/press2009/april-01-2009.htm>

In Solidarity

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