



The

# Advocate

at the table

Protecting the rights of OPSEU members  
at the Ontario Property Assessment Corporation



## Tentative agreement makes real gains

Your OPSEU bargaining team at the Ontario Property Assessment Corporation signed a tentative agreement with the employer at 5:11 a.m. this morning, May 1.

Backed by an 83 per cent strike vote and visible strike preparations right across the province, the OPSEU team made progress in every area where members said progress was needed to avoid a strike.

“The contract contains significant improvements on all the priority issues over the employer’s pre-strike vote offer,” said OPSEU negotiator Brian Gould.

The team is recommending unanimously that members ratify the tentative agreement. A ratification vote must be completed by May 10.

If ratified, the first collective agreement at OPAC will contain:

- a \$750 signing bonus (pro-rated for temporary employees based on hours worked in the last year);
- wage increases of 2, 2, and 3 per cent respectively in each year of a three-year deal expiring Dec. 31, 2002;
- benefit improvements for dental care and eyeglasses;

- holiday improvements;
- time off for union business, both locally and provincially;
- an Employee Assistance Program enshrined in the collective agreement; and
- conversion of temporary employees to regular positions after two years’ service (starting from date of ratification).

The union team did not get everything it wanted, however. The conversion of temporary employees and wage increases for Property Assessor 3s did not work out as hoped, team chair Will Presley said.

“The rights of contract staff were a very big issue for us,” he said. “The employer had no interest in doing anything at all for them. As of yesterday, we told the employer that a strike was guaranteed if they did not table anything on this issue. That’s how we got the two-year rollovers. Then they stopped moving. This morning at the deadline, we decided to bring the issue to the members.”

Another partial victory was the wage increase for Property Assessor 3s. The employer had offered lump sum payments, but no movement on the pay grid. In

the end, the compromise was two years of lump-sum payments, equal to the value of the movement on the grid, and the three-per-cent increase on the grid in the third year.

Some gains came from the defeat of employer concessions. The agreement gives full recognition of seniority for purposes of layoff and recall; the employer will pay overtime after 40 ¼ hours, not 44 as they had demanded; and mileage will be paid at a flat 30 cents per kilometre in Southern Ontario and 30.5 cents per kilometre in Northern Ontario, not on a sliding scale.

The full text of the tentative agreement will be available on the OPSEU web site as soon as possible today.

The union bargaining team would like to thank members and staff for the hard work and strong support that made this tentative agreement possible.

In solidarity,

Will Presley (Chair, Local 633)

Jennifer Reid, (Vice-Chair,  
Local 105)

Peter Thompson (Local 133)

Bill Henry (Local 322)

Larry Deschenes (Local 463)

Tina Faibish (Local 534)

Peter Thachuk (Local 534)

