

# Talks begin today

Contract talks between MPAC and your elected OPSEU bargaining team start today.

Your team will meet the employer in Toronto for an initial exchange of proposals. No negotiations are expected until the two sides have a chance to study each others' demands.

The union and the employer have dates booked throughout December and January to negotiate. Bargaining is scheduled for:

- December 18, 19, 20;
- January 7, 8, 9;
- January 13, 14, 15; and
- January 20, 21, 22

"That's enough time to either get a deal or realize that we are in the ditch," says OPSEU negotiator Brian Gould, who will work with the team. Gould says he feels "optimistic" about the chances for fruitful negotiations with MPAC.

The union's opening demands will be posted on the OPSEU web site at <http://www.opseu.org/bps/opac/uniondemands.pdf> this afternoon; employer demands will be posted as soon as we have them in electronic form.



# Big cities sign on

Three major Ontario cities have climbed on board OPSEU's campaign for quality property assessment services.

Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, and Hamilton have all passed strongly-worded resolutions decrying the jobs cuts and restructuring at MPAC that mean a lot of important work is simply not getting done. More and more municipalities say the downsized MPAC is costing them money.

Building permits for 2002 for the City of Hamilton alone are worth over \$500 million. Hamilton city council called on Ontario Finance Minister Janet Ecker to "establish appropriate benchmarks for the timely delivery of services

such as apportionments of split/merged properties, supplementary assessments, commercial/industrial property enumerations and delivery of assessment rolls to municipalities."

Meanwhile, in small-town Ontario, a report in the Peterborough *Examiner* says Asphodel-Norwood Township is losing out on \$4 million in assessed value because an understaffed MPAC has been unable to process 98 building permits. In LaSalle, councillor John Tedesco told the Windsor *Star* that "there's no doubt that cutting front-line staff will have a negative impact on customer service."

The Hamilton resolution, passed Nov. 27, brings the total number reported to date to 34.

# Keep in touch!

To keep in touch with your OPSEU bargaining team, contact the member responsible for communication with your office. For confidentiality, please use our home e-mail addresses, listed below:

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