



Bargaining teams finish training, get down to work

Your OPS bargaining teams, fresh from a week's training at the Kempenfelt Centre in Barrie, moved to the bargaining centre on September 15 to begin preparations for the upcoming round of negotiations.

Team training was a positive experience for team members and staff, and everyone came away ready to negotiate. During the week, members learned about bargaining history in the OPS, legal issues, things they may expect from the employer and how political pressure plays out at the table. Staff experts on benefits, pensions, bargaining unit integrity and equity gave presentations. There were also in-depth discussions on member mobilizing, communications as well as practical exercises concerning how the teams will function in caucus and at the bargaining table.

Of course, it wasn't all work and no play. Team members bonded during the week with some planned and unplanned activities, including

an after-dinner scavenger hunt that didn't go exactly as hoped. Split into four teams, the members had only a vague clue on the items they had to collect instead of a set list, with items placed around the grounds by the coordinators. Unexpectedly the teams descended on the grounds like a swarm of locusts, grabbing anything that wasn't nailed down, including items that weren't part of the exercise. However, staff ensured that sofa cushions, fire extinguishers and even a wheelbarrow would be returned to their proper places.

This week, team members begin the momentous task of studying the local demands and priorities for this coming round. The teams will also be busy in the coming weeks preparing the documents to present to the employer on November 4.

Stay tuned for updates as they become available.

Priorities to remain under wraps

Many locals have been asking what the bargaining priorities are for this round of negotiations, and how the issues ranked for Central, Unified and Corrections.

Unfortunately, those results will not be published, and bargaining team members will not be able to reveal the results.

Why all the secrecy? Simply put, the last thing the teams want to do is tell the employer what the priorities are before bargaining even begins. Even when bargaining does start, it is vital that

the teams have the ability to reveal positions to the employer when it is most strategic to do so.

"The teams have agreed not to discuss any aspects of the demands prior to meeting with the employer on Nov. 4," said Central Chair Eric Morin. "I know this will be frustrating for members, but it is imperative to keep our position confidential until then."

Corrections Chair David Kerr agrees. "We don't want to give the employer any advantages

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Your bargaining teams

Central/Unified Team

Eric Morin, Chair	CERC Rep
Dennis Wilson	Region 1 Rep
Anne Pereira	Region 2 Rep
Roxanne Barnes, Vice-Chair	Region 3 Rep
Chris Cormier	Region 4 Rep
Shelley McCormick	Region 5 Rep
Jim Finnigan	Region 6 Rep
Carl Thibodeau	Region 7 Rep
Karrie Ouchas	Administrative Rep
Derek Miller	Corrections Rep
Jennifer Roukkula	Institutional Health Care Rep
Lynda Ferguson	Office Admin Rep
Alicia Czekierda	Office Admin Rep
Dan Vincent	Oper. & Maint./Technical Rep
Nathan Aubin	Unclassified Rep

Corrections Team

David Kerr, Chair	Region 1
Paul Johnstone	Region 2
Pete Wright, Vice Chair	Region 3
Tom O'Neill	Region 4
Dave Graves	Region 5
John Mearini	Region 6
Richard Cunningham	Region 7

Under wraps

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before we even start talks. That would completely work against us.”

So if you ask a team member what is happening over the next few weeks, don't expect much in the way of an answer.

The teams thank you for your patience, and appreciate the support and confidence you have given to do the best job possible for the members.

Authorized for distribution,



Eric Morin, Chair
Central/Unified Team



David Kerr, Chair
Corrections Team



Warren (Smokey) Thomas, President
Ontario Public Service Employees Union