



Ambulance dispatchers go for a raise

OPSEU will meet with Ontario government negotiators April 7 to discuss a wage increase for ambulance dispatchers.

“Thanks to the ambulance dispatchers’ tireless campaigning on this issue, it appears that the government may have finally woken up and realized it must solve its recruitment and retention crisis,” said OPSEU president Leah Casselman.

The province has admitted that the CACCs suffer from an annual staff turnover rate of 30 per cent.

The meeting is the result of a bad faith bargaining charge OPSEU filed against the employer.

The union filed the charge last spring after learning that the government, in the middle of contract talks, had suppressed an independent report on ambulance dispatch. The report recommended higher wages, more staff and better equipment at the province’s 11 Central Ambulance Communications Centres (CACCs).

Roy Storey, OPS negotiations supervisor, will be the staff negotiator. The bargaining team is Sandy Edwards, vice-president, Local 302, from the Oshawa CACC and Patrick Fry-Smith, vice-president, Local 201, from the Hamilton CACC.

Edwards and Fry-Smith have

been spearheading the dispatchers’ campaign for higher wages. Sandy is the dispatcher rep on the Ministry of Health Employees Relations Committee. Patrick is the dispatcher advisor to the Ambulance Division.

Mediator Gerry Lee, who has many years of experience working with the OPS collective agreement, will be on hand to help the two parties reach an agreement.

“This is a momentous occasion for dispatchers in this province,” Edwards says. “It’s a rare thing for any employer to discuss a wage increase during the life of a collective agreement.”

“After years of neglect, the province might finally understand the importance of the work we do,” said Fry-Smith.

Edwards and Fry-Smith said they’ll negotiate the best deal possible, but cautioned that neither side gets everything that it wants in bargaining.

“We will let our members know in the CACCs of any outcome from April 7 as soon as we can,” said Edwards.

If you have any questions, please contact Sandy Edwards at san_Edwards@yahoo.ca or Patrick Fry-Smith at pfry@metrocity.com.

American Sign Language video ready soon


A new OPSEU video for use by deaf members in the OPS will be ready in time for the April 3-5 Convention. The 20-minute video uses American Sign Language to explain the basics of the OPS collective agreement and how to enforce it.

Locals who want copies should contact Mary-Anne Di Adamo by phone at 1-800-268-7376 or (416) 443-8888 (ask for extension 664) or by e-mail at mdiadamo@opseu.org.

Collective agreement on the press

The OPSEU collective agreement for the OPS will be available in book form soon. It went to print this week. Copies are expected to be ready for shipping by Convention. In the meantime, it’s still online at <http://www.opseu.org/ops/collective/collective.htm>.

Authorized for distribution:


Leah Casselman, president.