

# Labour Reporter

The voice of Saskatchewan's working class since 1956



Summer/  
Autumn 2024

In photos:  
Summer Camp & Labour Day

Liberals take workers for ride

State of the Unions

UWHC celebrates 30 years supporting workers



# EVENTS



UPCOMING

OCT  
23-25

## SFL CONVENTION

SASKATOON - This biennial SFL gathering brings together union leaders and rank-and-file members from across the province. This convention will celebrate our victories, imagine our future, and reaffirm our strength in solidarity!

APR/MAY  
2025

## SPRING SCHOOL

MOOSE JAW - A joint CLC/SFL annual labour educational for both experienced union activists & the next generation of labour leaders. Course offerings include workers' issues, conflict resolution, and steward training.

JUNE  
2025

## PRAIRIE SCHOOL

TBD - The Prairie School for Union Women offers four days of learning & sharing in a supportive environment. This school will develop women's personal & leadership skills while building solidarity among women workers.

AUG  
2025

## SUMMER CAMP

SHEKINAH - The SFL Summer Camp is offered to young people aged 13-16 from a union household. Campers engage in active learning, recreation, & social events rooted in union values of cooperation, equality, and social justice.



LEARN MORE & REGISTER AT:  
[SFL.SK.CA](http://SFL.SK.CA)

## Labour Reporter

Labour Reporter is proudly published by the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour. It is sent directly to the homes of working people and to the offices of their unions.

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Nathaniel J.D. Cole

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Summer/Autumn 2024

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## Strength in solidarity will be crucial this October

I feel like I'm always saying it, but it's true - it's been an exciting few months at the Federation! And as fall sets in, it's going to get awfully busy.

Of course, our small but nimble staff team are dedicated to making the upcoming SFL Convention one of the best ever. Between October 23 and 25, we'll debate resolutions, elect a new Executive Council, take in presentations on private sector union tactics & our energy future, and celebrate union achievements and milestones.

With the theme of "Strength In Solidarity," it amplifies an important message, one I know our affiliates are dedicated to. We simply *must* have each others' backs to make gains for all working people.

October at the Federation will be all about multi-tasking. Just days after our Convention comes to a close, Saskatchewanians will decide should we re-elect Scott Moe and the Sask Party, or give Carla Beck and the NDP a chance in charge. Unlike the last two decades, there is a real sense of uncertainty about what the outcome might be.

At risk of sounding like a broken record, a lot is at stake this election. We've all seen too many epi-

***"Without defeating the Sask Party, we will exhaust ourselves to simply maintain the status quo."***

***A change in government would provide us a moment of opportunity."***



SFL President Lori Johb rallying GSU picketers

sodes of the Sask Party Show. With the current cast, I can promise you that another season would be the worst one yet. Without defeating the Sask. Party, it will be an all-hands-on-deck battle, desperate to defend what's left of workers' rights and public services in Saskatchewan. We will exhaust ourselves to simply maintain the status quo.

A change in government would provide us a moment of opportunity. Don't get me wrong - we'll still have to work like hell, but for something different. Imagine how we might get to *actually* make gains for workers! We can demand a return to card check. Picket, rally, and disrupt to undo essential services damage and put the notwithstanding clause to bed once and for all. Fight to end strikebreaking with anti-scab legislation.

Nothing we've ever earned wasn't without a fight, and it's only possible by working together.

This October, I'll have the strength of our solidarity top of mind. Between our Convention and on doorsteps, I look forward to seeing so many of you soon. ||

## Celebrating the Unemployed Workers Help Centre

*30 years, 2000 appeals, and over \$10 million in benefits*

*Submitted by Mark Crawford*

This fall will mark the 30th anniversary of the Unemployed Workers Help Centre. The UWHC is a classic and successful example of the social and economic benefits to the broader community that unions provide to all Saskatchewan workers regardless of any union affiliation.

The UWHC is an independent, community-based organization which provides information, advocacy and representation for Employment Insurance claimants in Saskatchewan.

The UWHC was founded in the fall of 1994 by a group representing Saskatchewan unions, community organizations and educators. The initial funding came from SFL, the Saskatchewan Building Trades Council, other unions and union centrals.

This group had recognized that workers in Saskatchewan were being denied or not accessing their UI benefits at a significantly greater rate than workers in any other province in the country. And they saw the solution to that in the creation of an unemployed workers help organization to ensure unemployed workers got the UI benefits they were entitled to.

The first office was established in Regina in space that was provided by the Prairie Regional Office of the Canadian Labour Congress.

The first official act of the organization was a presentation to a Federal Standing Committee of MPs meeting in Regina in November of 1994. The committee was accepting briefs and presentations from organizations in response to the government's intention to slash social program funding to provinces and, at the same time, make fundamental changes

to the unemployment insurance program which of course we disagreed with because of the negative consequences to unemployed workers.

The organization had immediate, significant success in representing workers with UI issues and disqualifications and as a result, a second office was opened in Saskatoon in 1997.

The second office in Saskatoon was established when the Calvert government of the time recognized the initial success and financial benefits to the province and its workers of the UWHC, and agreed to provide annual government funding to supplement the Saskatchewan union funding.

But to this day, over half their funding base continues to be through the generosity of Saskatchewan unions. In the past thirty years, the UWHC has represented and assisted thousands of workers from all corners of this province, union and non-union.

In 30 years, we have filed almost 2000 appeals for workers who have been disqualified, disentitled or faced financial penalties. Over 75% of those appeals have been successful; recovering at least \$10-15 million in EI benefits for Saskatchewan workers.

We estimate their EI claim advice, advocacy for workers and national EI case law guide has resulted in several more millions in benefits for workers in Saskatchewan and has been of significant benefit for workers across this country who have successfully appealed their denied EI claims using our EI case law guide.

We say all the UWHC success is directly a result of the support of our sisters and brothers in Saskatchewan unions for the past 30 years. ||



# IN PHOTOS

*PSUW, Labour Day, and more!*



*Prairie School for Union Women (above) and SGEU at Regina Labour Day*



*From the STF & GSU picket lines, welcoming the CLFPA to the house of labour, and more Labour Day*





# 'Labour For Labour' campaigns for workers

From the editor

The Sask Party was first elected to government in 2007. For seventeen long years, Saskatchewan has been governed by Brad Wall & Scott Moe.

Over that time, the Sask. Party has favoured friends & corporate interests instead of workers. Lest we forget things like:

- Essential services legislation
- Axing the film tax credit
- Selling off STC & public liquor stores
- Ending card check certification
- The lowest minimum wage in Canada
- Using the notwithstanding clause to suspend worker & student Charter rights.

That's why – with political winds of change blowing – your SFL has been laser focused on defeating Scott Moe and the Sask Party this October. *Speak Up Saskatchewan* has connected us with tens of thousands of regular people, ready for better.

Our *Labour For Labour* initiative launched in August, which directly supports union members running to defeat Sask. Party candidates. The SFL will be all over the province through election day, supporting union initiatives to finally defeat Scott Moe and his anti-worker government.

Regular people deserve better. After seventeen long years, enough is enough. ||

## Labour For Labour candidates

*Support pro-labour union members this provincial election!*

- Batoche: **Trina Miller** (CPAA)
- Canora-Pelly: **Wynn Fedorchuk** (MGEU)
- Cumberland: **Jordan McPhail** (Unifor)
- Humboldt-Watrous: **Kevin Fallis** (SEIU)
- Last Mountain-Touchwood: **Thera Nordal** (CUPE)
- Lloydminster: **Adam Tremblay** (STF)
- Lumsden-Morse: **Chauntel Baudu** (STF, URFA)
- Martensville-Blairmore: **Tammy Pike** (CUPE)
- Melville-Saltcoats: **Karen Hovind** (STF)
- Moose Jaw Wakamow: **Melissa Patterson** (RWDSU, COPE)
- Prince Albert Northcote: **Nicole Rancourt** (PSAC)
- Regina Elphinstone-Centre: **Meara Conway** (CUPE)
- Regina Mount Royal: **Trent Wotherspoon** (STF)
- Regina Northeast: **Jacqueline Roy** (STF)
- Regina Rochdale: **Joan Pratchler** (SUN)
- Regina Walsh Acres: **Jared Clarke** (STF)
- Regina Wascana Plains: **Brent Blakley** (STF)
- Rosetown-Delisle: **Brenda Edel** (Unifor)
- Rosthern-Shellbrook: **Mark Thunderchild** (Unifor)
- Saskatoon Eastview: **Matt Love** (STF)
- Saskatoon Fairview: **Vicki Mowat** (CUPE)
- Saskatoon Meewasin: **Nathaniel Teed** (CUPE)
- Saskatoon Stonebridge: **Darcy Warrington** (STF)
- Saskatoon Westview: **April ChiefCalf** (SGEU)
- The Battlefords: **Tom Kroczyński** (STF)



## Summer marked by roller coaster ride with Liberals

Unions, workers, and labour-friendly Parliamentarians spent decades to get an anti-scab law on the books in Ottawa. Not only would it rebalance labour law for federally-regulated workers, it would set a precedent for provinces to follow.

What a milestone when anti-scab legislation was debated, passed, and became law in the summer of 2024, largely due to the support of the Liberal government.

Shortly thereafter, Minister O'Regan – a key proponent of the law – resigned. That left a brand new Minister to oversee the labour dispute between Teamsters Rail and

the rail duopoly of CN & CPKC. Events unfolded quickly, and in a callous move, the Minister ordered rail workers back to work. As SFL President Lori Johb wrote on August 26:

In spite of a labour dispute about serious rail worker safety concerns, the federal labour minister unilaterally and gutlessly ordered Teamsters to return to work on Saturday. This is dangerous.

The Liberals have once again double-crossed us. With the ink barely dry on federal anti-scab legislation,

*they've overrode a worker's right to withhold labour with the stroke of a pen.*

*Back-to-work legislation - while offensive to workers - at least requires debate and a vote in Parliament.*

*This is bad news for every worker. Saskatchewan's labour movement fiercely defends the hard-fought constitutional Right to Strike we won a decade ago.*

It was an optimistic start and frustrating end to summer for any hope of a working relationship between labour and Trudeau Liberals. ||



# State of the unions

## Anti-scab update

Since our last issue, Bill C-58 (anti-scab bill) has been passed into law, thanks to the work of Canada's unions and labour-friendly politicians in Parliament. Scabs undermine collective bargaining, which tips the balance of power to the employer.

With this new federal legislation, along with similar from the Manitoba NDP government, workers' rights are improving across Canada. In Saskatchewan, a change in government is needed, as the Sask. Party is not in favour of anti-scab rules, and has a track record of eroding workers' rights.

## It's election time

Saskatchewanians go to the polls October 28. The SFL has been collaborating with politically active unions, along with a digital campaign framing top-of-mind issues to workers ahead of the election.

The most recent Speak Up Saskatchewan campaign has been one of the most popular, calling for an end to privatization in healthcare. Stay tuned for more exciting content from the SFL in the coming weeks.

## UFCW lockout eclipses one-year mark

September 7 marked one year since 85 UFCW 1400 workers were locked out from the Heritage Inns at Moose Jaw and Saskatoon.

As the employer has demanded workers concede their entire benefits package and wage increases over a seven-year contract, these resilient workers continue to hold the line. One day longer, one day stronger!

## GSU on strike

At the time of press, GSU Local 8 (Advanced Employees' Assoc.) has been on strike for several weeks, pick-

eting Advanced Tank Centres location on Henderson Drive in Regina.

Following a 100% strike vote, 75 workers walked off the job on August 8. Local President Doug Murray says that while they approached bargaining with an open mind, the frustrated workers demand fair pay, adequate benefits, and basic respect.

## Change of guard at WCB, CUPE

This spring, Judy Henley was promoted to a full-time member of the Workers' Compensation Board. She had previously served as a part-time WCB labour member for several years.

Judy had to step away from her post as CUPE Saskatchewan President. Kent Peterson, our Secretary-Treasurer at the SFL, was elected as her successor in March..

Many congratulations to both Judy and Kent, who are both such strong proponents of solidarity and our Federation. The building trades' Dion Malakoff is the new part-time labour member of the WCB.

## Singh breaks up with Trudeau

Federal NDP leader Jagmeet Singh announced at the beginning of September that the confidence and supply agreement with the governing Trudeau Liberals has ended.

At the time of press, an election was not imminent, but as CLC President Bea Bruske noted, "it will certainly raise the political temperature in Ottawa."

## Happy trails, Bronwyn!

Bronwyn Heerspink gave a great encore performance at the SFL this summer, this time in a four-month co-op placement. All the best to her as she returns to Ottawa to complete her Masters program. ||



SFL Summer Camp 2024, Shekinah (Various)





This page is a poster - carefully tear off and hang on a union board, or give to a friend!

THE SFL PRESENTS:

# SPEAK UP SASKATCHEWAN



[SPEAKUPSASK.CA](http://SPEAKUPSASK.CA)



We're building a coalition of people across Saskatchewan speaking up for good jobs, for better schools & hospitals, and for a government that gets it.

**JOIN THE MOVEMENT TODAY**