

# Communicator

Canadian Union of Public Employees – Local 500

Winter 2013

## Custodial services under attack!

The City of Winnipeg has served notice to Local 500 of its intention to contract out custodial services in various city facilities and offices.

On October 22, the city's Alternate Service Delivery (ASD) Committee approved using the Modified Managed Competition process to pursue an alternative operating model for custodial services in city office buildings and facilities. Currently, a combination of city staff and contractors are used to provide custodial services within city offices, libraries, pools and recreation centres.

“Our members in custodial services are the eyes and ears that help maintain a safe environment in many civic buildings, libraries, aquatic and recreation facilities,” said Local 500 President, Mike Davidson. “The city is putting the citizens at risk of losing highly skilled and experienced employees who are dedicated to providing clean and safe facilities. Instead, they will end up with a private contractor who hires low paid workers in order to make a profit.”



Since mid-December, custodial members have been distributing postcards to help educate the public about the importance of keeping this service public. The Local is also airing a new radio ad surrounding this issue. You can listen to the ad by visiting the Local's website at [cupe500.mb.ca](http://cupe500.mb.ca).

## Eighteen new shop stewards ready to help members

*Right Photo: New shop stewards pose for picture following the Introduction to Stewarding course on January 11 & 12*



Local 500 shop stewards are some of the first members you meet at the workplace. They work with members and the employer to help solve problems and make sure your contract is followed.

On January 11 and 12, eighteen shop stewards completed the Introduction to Stewarding Course and are ready to help out in the workplace.

“I would like to thank each of the members who came out in blizzard conditions to take this training,” said Local 500 President, Mike Davidson. “Stewards are the backbone of our union and we thank them for stepping forward to volunteer in this important role.”

For more information on becoming a shop steward, contact us at 204-942-1001.

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## President's Message

First, I would like to wish everyone a Happy New Year! I hope 2013 brings you and your family good health, prosperity and much happiness.

In this issue of the Communicator, we honour and recognize the contributions of a number of union members, past and present. It is most appropriate that we do this.

We also profile a number of key issues facing our Local. And, we bring you up to date on the bargaining scene at Riverview Health Centre and with our affiliates.

The Local has had a busy January so far on a number of fronts. For the first time, the city tabled both the capital and operating budgets on the same date. While the budget calls for a property tax increase, many departments remain under-funded and the city's infrastructure deficit continues to grow. One of the biggest concerns to the Local is the \$13.6 million dollars identified in vacancy management. This continuing practice of leaving positions vacant, has taken its toll on almost every single department within the City of Winnipeg. Not only is this process a non-transparent erosion of the city's front line-services, it ultimately impairs the city's ability to deliver needed programs.

The operating budget also proposes reductions to grants at the St. Boniface, St. James and Transcona museums. Employees at these locations are Local 500 members.



Mike Davidson

The local will be continuing its advertising campaign to reach out and educate the public on the value of public services and ramifications of privatization and the sell-off of city assets.

Staying connected with the membership is an important function of our Local. We use a variety of methods to communicate on issues important to you. Please watch for updates provided through our mass emails, on our website, facebook page or check your bulletin boards regularly.

This year will be a very challenging one, but by working together, we will accomplish our goals.

In closing, I would like to thank each and every member of our Local for the great work you do and for your continued support. Keep our union strong!



## Table Officers

### **President**

Mike Davidson

### **1<sup>st</sup> Vice President**

Howard McCubbin

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President**

Glenoria Molnar

### **Treasurer**

Phil Dembicki

### **Secretary**

Rebecca Scott

### **Warden**

Cathy Williams-Stewart

### **Trustees**

#### **1 year**

Margaret Feliksiak

#### **2 year**

Elizabeth Blair

#### **3 year**

Keith Taenzer

## Sign up for email news!

Sign up at [cupe500.mb.ca](http://cupe500.mb.ca) to receive the latest news and updates. Don't miss out!

## Local 500 partners for hope at Siloam Mission

Local 500 members and staff recognize the importance of giving back to the community and helping those who are less fortunate.

In the fall of 2012, the Local partnered for hope by contributing \$1,000 to sponsor a meal and volunteered to help serve alongside others at the downtown homeless shelter.

"I think it's great that our members came out to help those in need," said Local 500 President, Mike Davidson. "Until you see the need, you really don't realize the huge impact Siloam has on so many lives. It's truly been an eye opener for all of us."

As many as 2,000 homeless people live in Winnipeg and about 500 people visit Siloam every day.



Local 500 Partner for Hope volunteers at Siloam Mission

## Arbitration Victories!

Local 500 recorded two recent arbitration victories in the Public Works and Water and Waste Department.

The following is a brief summary of the award decisions.

In the **Public Works Department**, the case involved two grievances and two separate grievors. Both grievors were disciplined in the form of termination from the City of Winnipeg. The employer alleged that the employees were terminated for time theft (leaving early – coming in late).

In his decision, the arbitrator noted that in one of the cases, the city failed to satisfy the onus of proving theft of time on the balance of probabilities. In the second case, the arbitrator found that while there was evidence of time theft, the penalty imposed was not consistent in comparison to discipline imposed on other employees in the same workplace. Both employees were reinstated to their positions.

In the **Water and Waste Department**, the grievor was denied equipment operator training opportunities, while junior staff including summer students and external hires, were approved for such training. The employer alleged that the employee was denied training because he lacked public relations skills and should not be trained to operate equipment.

In his decision, the arbitrator ruled that the city violated the collective agreement by failing to act fairly, reasonably and consistently with the agreement as a whole in denying training opportunities to the grievor.

The Local will remain diligent in pursuing all matters that have merit to ensure the rights of our members are protected.

If you would like to read the above arbitration cases in full, contact the Local 500 office at 204-942-1001.

## Provincial Health Care Council (PHCC) bargaining resumes

After months of delays, PHCC bargaining has resumed on behalf of the over 10,000 CUPE health care workers in Manitoba including Local 500 members at Riverview Health Centre and the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA).

In April, 2012, the Province of Manitoba announced the merger of 11 Regional Health Authorities into 5 new regions. This triggered a representation vote in the newly formed regions by the Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union (MGEU). As a result, the employer was unwilling to proceed with bargaining until the votes were concluded.

In October 2012, CUPE filed an unfair labour complaint against the provincial government, claiming that health care bargaining was improperly delayed. Subsequently, the employer agreed to return to the negotiating table.

Bargaining dates have been scheduled throughout January, February and March, 2013. The CUPE Master Health Care Agreement expired on March 31, 2012.

Local 500 members Val Sobiak and Barbara Greengrass of Riverview Health Centre, both serve on the PHCC bargaining committee.

## Convention Centre contract

On November 14, Local 500 members at the Winnipeg Convention Centre ratified a new four-year collective agreement. The new contract contains wage increases of 0.5 and 2.5 per cent. Other highlights include increases to shift premium and footwear allowance and improvements to bereavement leave. The agreement also provides for vacation improvements for part-time staff.

The new contract remains in effect until February 4, 2016.

## Gateway Recreation Centre ratifies new agreement

A new agreement was reached between CUPE Local 500 and Gateway Recreation Centre. The new four-year agreement which was ratified on December 3, calls for a wage increase of 2% in 2013 and 2014 and 2.5% in 2015. In addition, members received a \$0.20 to \$0.60 hourly increase plus 1% effective July 1, 2012.

Other highlights include improvements to vacation, uniforms and vehicle allowance. The agreement also provides for the merging of the Janitors/Maintenance staff with the Arena Attendants to form one collective agreement.



## Local 500 honors life members



2012 Honorary Life Members: Walter Skomoroh (left) and Gordon Frost

Two CUPE members were welcomed into the Local 500 honorary life membership at a dinner held in their honor on October 19, 2012.

Honorary life membership is awarded to outstanding CUPE members for their services given to the Local over an extended period of time.

The members added were: Walter Skomoroh and Gordon Frost.

Local 500 President Mike Davidson presented the members with a plaque and CUPE ring in appreciation of their years of service to the union.

Also attending the dinner were current honorary life members who received their award in previous years.

## CUPE boardroom named after Ed Blackman

CUPE's boardroom, located on the 7th floor of the Union Centre, was named in honor of the late Ed Blackman, a former Local 500 President.

Brother Ed Blackman died in July 2011. He served as President of Local 500 from 1976 until his retirement in 1993.

The naming of the boardroom was marked with a dedication ceremony and reception on December 12 that included some of Ed's family members and friends.

The plaque bearing Ed's name and photo is located to the left of the doorway just outside the boardroom.

"Ed was a noted and respected labour leader and an active member of the community," said Local 500 President, Mike Davidson. "This is but one way for us to pay tribute to a man who dedicated himself to improving the lives of working people."

CUPE National President Paul Moist said naming the boardroom after Ed was very fitting for a man who is remembered as a gentleman, a great trade unionist and a respected leader for CUPE.



Top photo: Local 500 President Mike Davidson with Shirlee Blackman  
Bottom photo: Family members gather beside the Ed Blackman plaque at dedication ceremony.



## CUPE welcomes Southdale Recreation Association

Local 500 recently won the right to represent the Arena Building Servicers/Operators and Custodial Staff at Southdale Community Centre. The union is currently in the process of negotiating a first agreement. Local 500 also represents workers at three other Winnipeg community centres. The Local welcomes the new members to CUPE.