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# THE CUPE CONNECTION

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## It's time to get out and vote

October 21st. The big day for municipal elections, but the question is, "Will you go and vote?"

Municipal elections are usually not the most anticipated, or even the one that most people tend to participate in. What many Calgarians seem to forget is that though the provincial and federal elections are important, it is the municipal elections that have the most direct impact on our lives. Federal, and provincial elections tend to cover broad based economy, or legislations, but the impact of such legislations or funding released by the government is handed out through the city council. For example, if there is increased funding for public transport, the routes that will be impacted, or how that money is used will have greater input from the City, not provincial or federal governments. When we as Calgarians forget this, it helps usher in representatives who may not be in line with the priorities that you see as important for your city.

But what about us as public sector employees? These elections are extremely important for us. Making sure that, as Calgarians, we vote for a candidate who understands the needs and value of the public sector is critical. Budget decisions by Council impact every aspect of our daily lives, from staffing decisions to contracting out of jobs to project priorities. Too often we have seen Council decisions made to benefit short-term political considerations, leaving City employees to suffer the consequences. It is important to support those candidates that have a demonstrated commitment to the public sector.

So please, take a few minutes, and get yourself informed. Look at the candidates track record, and where possible, volunteer to help out.

And on October 21<sup>st</sup>, get out and vote!  
Voting is your responsibility, not just your right.



## LAPP: The Attack Continues

In past newsletters, we have discussed the Alberta government's attempt to force changes to our pension plan through the Board of Trustees of the Local Authorities Pension Plan. In March of this year, the LAPP Trustees forwarded a report to the Government stating that the pension plan did not require any significant changes, with the exception of reviewing the governance structure.



Since that time, the Minister of Finance has made it known that he wishes to force through unspecified changes, directly ignoring the Board's recommendation. It is our understanding that the Minister's office will be presenting possible changes later in September. Since any changes require a recommendation from the LAPP Trustees, the Minister will have to change the legislation to enable the changes.

In other words, since the Minister of Finance didn't get the answer he wanted from the LAPP Board, he is going ahead with legislated changes to our plan. Plan members clearly did not want changes, the LAPP Board of Trustees did not want changes, yet the Minister has chosen to ignore this.

The City of Calgary has circulated a two page overview of the LAPP "sustainability planning." In this document, they state that "benefits that are already earned are preserved."

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## Local 38 Member steps up during June flooding

Even though she had put her name on the CEMA (Calgary Emergency Management Agency) call-out list one CUPE 38 member was surprised to receive an evening call-out Saturday after the flood hit. She responded to a request to register displaced East Village senior citizens at Ambrose University dormitories. It turned out what Ambrose really needed was a full functioning evacuation centre to be set-up.



Immediately a time-log of every event that transpired was started to track the incident – our members had the foresight to know the value it would bring later in a debrief on response times to the flood. As buses of Seniors arrived, our member, in conjunction with other City and Alberta Health Services staff rose to the task; performing a triage of needs and securing medical examinations, prescriptions, oxygen, clothes, food, a make-shift library, games, and on-site security. Citizens were shaken, in shock, all without power for some 48 hours, some without food, prescriptions or oxygen.

What started as a couple hours of volunteering turned into a late night-early morning event. Our members refused to leave the site until they knew that all the senior citizens had appropriate medical care and were tucked in for the night. And even with that one member stayed over night until the others could return. They were up late into the early morning drafting communications for the seniors when they awoke; covering any questions they may have about their location, transportation, prescriptions, food, hygiene and next steps. There was no script and no official word from CEMA on how to handle it; CEMA was busy with a hundred other crises. The members relied on their experience, intuition and a pool of professional skills.

The next day with only a few hours sleep they all returned to site to tackle the task of tracking all the evacuees and building a transition plan for the next group of City volunteers that came late that day. "City workers from parks, development, transit and roads started trickling in to volunteer where we transitioned specific roles for them," says one member. "At the transition, instead of going home smaller groups of union workers went out and did clean up with their own pickup trucks, much of which was organized from member to member. There were folks who worked through all their days off, cleaning up and running supplies to and from different areas to help out."

Endless support, the camaraderie and friendships she formed after that experience mean the world to her now. "I am proud to be a union member and public servant," she adds. The city and surrounding area are still recovering from the disaster, but the selfless volunteerism and neighbourly help moved her in a way that she will never forget: "We're here to help each other in any way we can."

### LAPP Attack—Continued from Page 1

It should be made clear to all current employees that, should the government remove the cost of living index from the plan, employees working today will not receive it when they retire. Should the government remove the "85 Factor", current employees will no longer be able to access if they don't already qualify.

It is becoming more apparent that changes to OUR PENSION plan are being contemplated as a cost savings for employers. Once the Minister announces the proposed changes, they must give reasonable notice to plan members. We will strive to keep you informed of any potential changes, but it is critical that all plan members contact their MLA as well the Minister of Finance to express their concerns about changes to the plan.

## CUPE collects over \$130,000 for Alberta flood relief

On September 3<sup>rd</sup> the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) handed over a cheque for \$25,000 to the Alberta Red Cross for flood relief. The cheque represents the latest installment in the union's fundraising efforts that have collected \$136,850 for victims of Alberta's spring floods.



CUPE Alberta President Marle Roberts handed the cheque over to Red Cross officials, saying the \$25,000 represents a donation from the union's national office, but it was only part of what CUPE is doing to offset the flood damage. "CUPE locals across Calgary and Alberta have made contributions, and we continue to collect funds from our members," said Roberts. "This is very important to our members and our union."

CUPE National President Paul Moist said the union will always help people in need. "CUPE is about building strong communities, and when the communities in Alberta need a hand, we are happy to give it," said Moist.

Roberts said that in addition to today's cheques, individual CUPE locals have contributed over \$65,000 to various flood relief organizations, as well as almost \$7,000 worth of grocery store gift cards for CUPE members displaced by floods. In addition, the union has collected about \$40,000 from members to be divided among CUPE members in 22 Alberta communities affected by flood damage.

### *CUPE Donations to flood relief*

CUPE 38: \$25,000 to Calgary Foundation Flood Relief  
CUPE 37: \$20,000 Flood Relief (specific agency still to be chosen)

CUPE 70: \$100.00 to the Red Cross concerning High River

CUPE 709: \$20,000 to the Red Cross

CUPE 1846: \$2,500.00 gift cards to members.

CUPE 4318: \$4,250.00 in gift cards to staff and CUPE Members.

CUPE National: \$25,000 dollars to Red Cross

Collection from CUPE members, CUPE AB and CUPE BC: \$40,000 to date

## Labour Day



CUPE 38 joined with other affiliated unions to the Calgary and District Labour Council to host the Annual Labour Day Picnic. In the shadows of Calgary's office towers, over 2,000 meals were served at Olympic Plaza to some of Calgary's less fortunate.

The day was marked with several activities to make the day enjoyable. CUPE Calgary distributed free second hand books to those interested.

This tradition was started by the labour movement during the *Great Depression* and is held in numerous city's across North America.

Local 38 would like to thank all the members who volunteered and contributed in making the event a success.

## **THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH**



**It's kind of fun to do the impossible.**

# GENERAL MEETING



Tuesday, SEPTEMBER 24, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Union Office

1439—9th Avenue South East

BUSINESS: Regular

1. Election of two (2) members to City's Negotiation Committees.

Please Note:

Contract proposals for the upcoming negotiations with the City of Calgary will be ratified at this meeting as well.