ISSUE #FPO May 2026

CUPE38 Connection

CUPE38 Connection brings you the latest updates, collaborative events, and resources to strengthen our community.

Join Our Next Meeting

Date : Tuesday, June 23, 2026

Time: 7:00 p.m. MST

Location : Virtual via Zoom

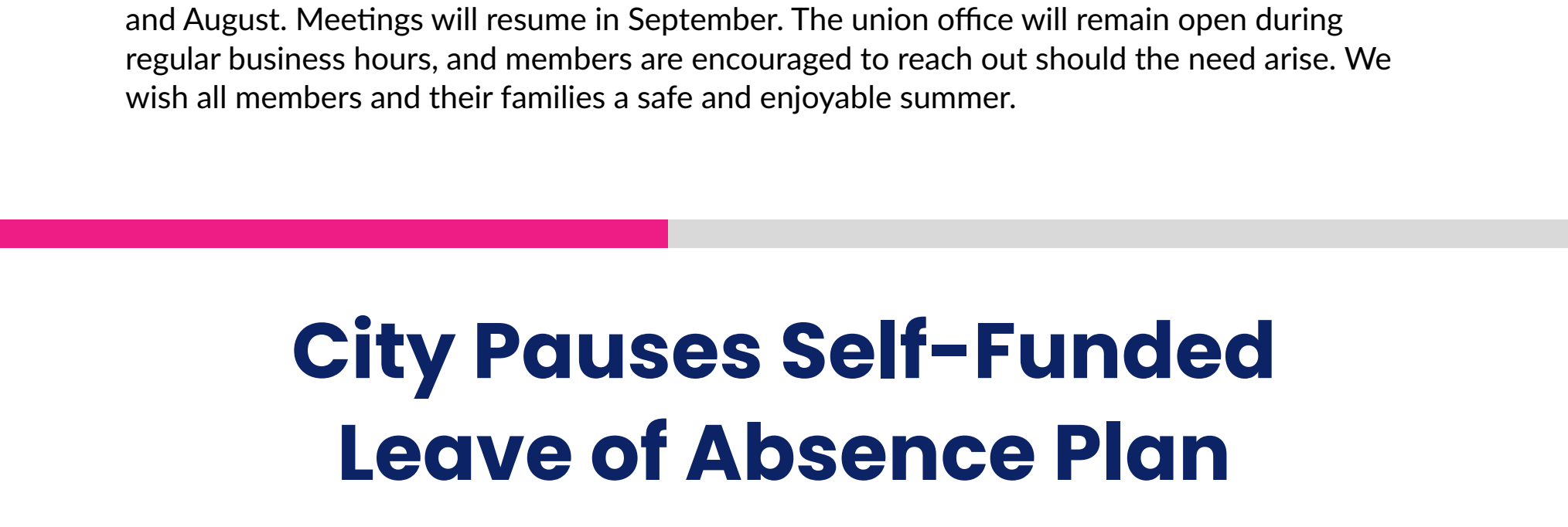
Agenda : Regular business and committee elections (OH&S committee – three members from the City; Equal Opportunities committee – four members from City or ENMAX)

RSVP : office@cupe38.org or call 403-233-2700

Notice: No Union Meetings in July and August

A reminder to all members that there will be no regularly scheduled union meetings during July and August. Meetings will resume in September. The union office will remain open during regular business hours, and members are encouraged to reach out should the need arise. We wish all members and their families a safe and enjoyable summer.

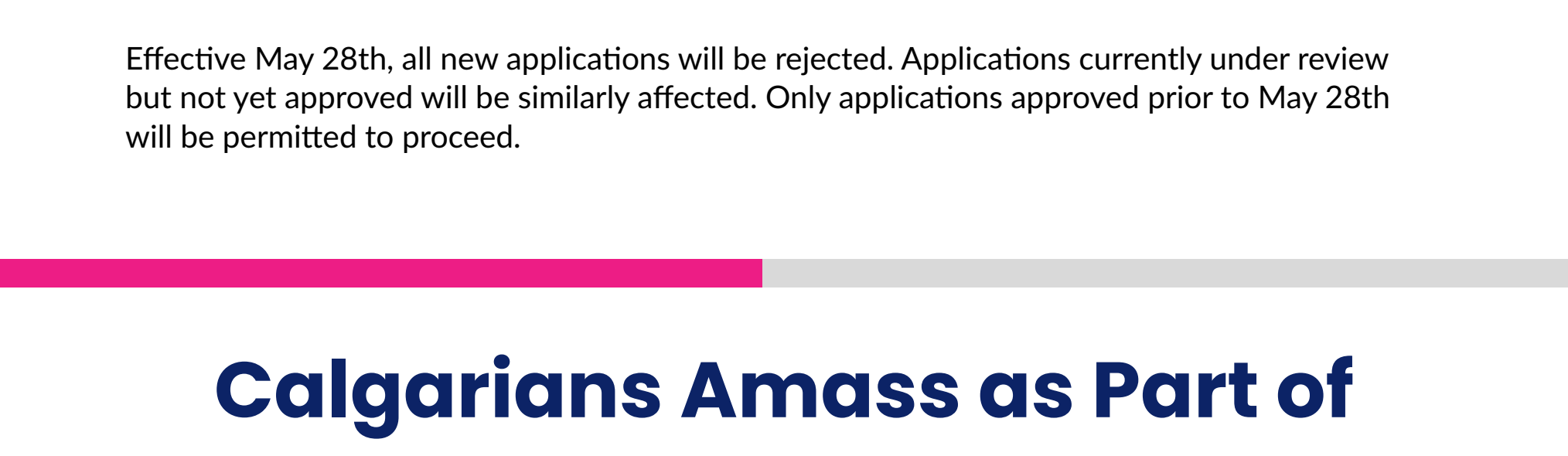
City Pauses Self-Funded Leave of Absence Plan



City unions were notified at the end of May that the City of Calgary is suspending its long-standing Self-Funded Leave of Absence Plan. The reasons behind the decision remain unclear; the City simply advised unions that "this action has been taken as a risk mitigation measure to support a focused review of plan commitments and administrative process."

Effective May 28th, all new applications will be rejected. Applications currently under review but not yet approved will be similarly affected. Only applications approved prior to May 28th will be permitted to proceed.

Calgarians Amass as Part of Province wide Protest in Opposition to UCP Policies



NOTE: This article was originally published in the Calgary Herald on May 29, 2026, written by Hiren Mansukhani. You can view the article online by clicking here.

Thousands gathered at Riley Park on Friday evening to voice their opposition against a litany of policies by the UCP as part of a provincewide rally that galvanized residents from across more than a dozen communities.

As the sun bore down on the protesters, their anger grew louder, with many shouting in unison with a speaker, who railed against a menu of grievances, including the separatist movement, the use of the notwithstanding clause against teachers and transgender students and recent health-care policies.

Standing at the tail end of a cheering crowd was Evan Gregory, who, exasperated by recent government decisions, happened upon a notice of the rally a few days ago. He decided it was an opportunity to publicly express his disappointment with the current government.

"I just inherently disagree with everything that the UCP is doing, and what they've done since they got in office," Gregory said. "It's a lot of wishy-washy messaging. I don't even know what's going on, you know. She's (Premier Danielle Smith) on the radio two days ago saying she's a federalist, but like, nothing — none of her actions point towards that.

"I definitely don't want to leave Canada — I think it would be exceptionally detrimental to our economy."

He was also against recent health-care policies some critics say have pushed Alberta closer to a two-tiered, profit-based model of health care that would deprive the most financially vulnerable of essential medical services.

"I think it's time we stand up and do something," he added. "I've had enough."

The protest was born out of an opposition to the province's deployment of the notwithstanding clause to force striking teachers back to their jobs.

The Alberta Federation of Labour was close to a general strike, but later backed off due to the legal ramifications facing teachers who violated recent legislation denying their right to strike.

As a result, they established regional committees and brought in more organizations to coordinate a provincewide protest, said Gil McGowan, president of the Alberta Federation of Labour and former NDP leadership candidate.

At first, the protest was planned to be against the use of the notwithstanding clause, but quickly grew to encompass a flood of policies released by the government. Now the rally, as McGowan succinctly puts it, is about "all of it."

"Starting with separatism, but that's certainly not the only thing that is motivating thousands and thousands of Albertans to get out and participate in our protests," he said. "We have a government that is implementing an agenda that no one voted for."

The protest drew a diverse group of people whose causes found solace in their frustration with the government. Colin Smith, a member of the Save Our Slopes coalition, was approaching others at the event, raising awareness about UCP's cancellation of a decades-old policy to block open-pit coal development that paved the way for international firms to start mining projects in the eastern slopes of the Rockies, triggering a wave of complaints among local residents about contamination of rivers.

"Water is life, and therefore those mountains where water comes from are life, and they need to be protected as critical infrastructure, just like hospitals and roads," Smith argued. "These mountains are our lifeblood, and coal mining, logging, and overall degradation are sacrificing the potential resilient future that we have."

But mining wasn't the only cause that garnered his attention. "I'm out here in solidarity with the teachers, with health-care workers, with all the diverse people that make up Alberta to stand in opposition to the current government's direction of separatism and attacks on immigrants and dismantling our democratic institutions."

Not all protesters were those on the left.

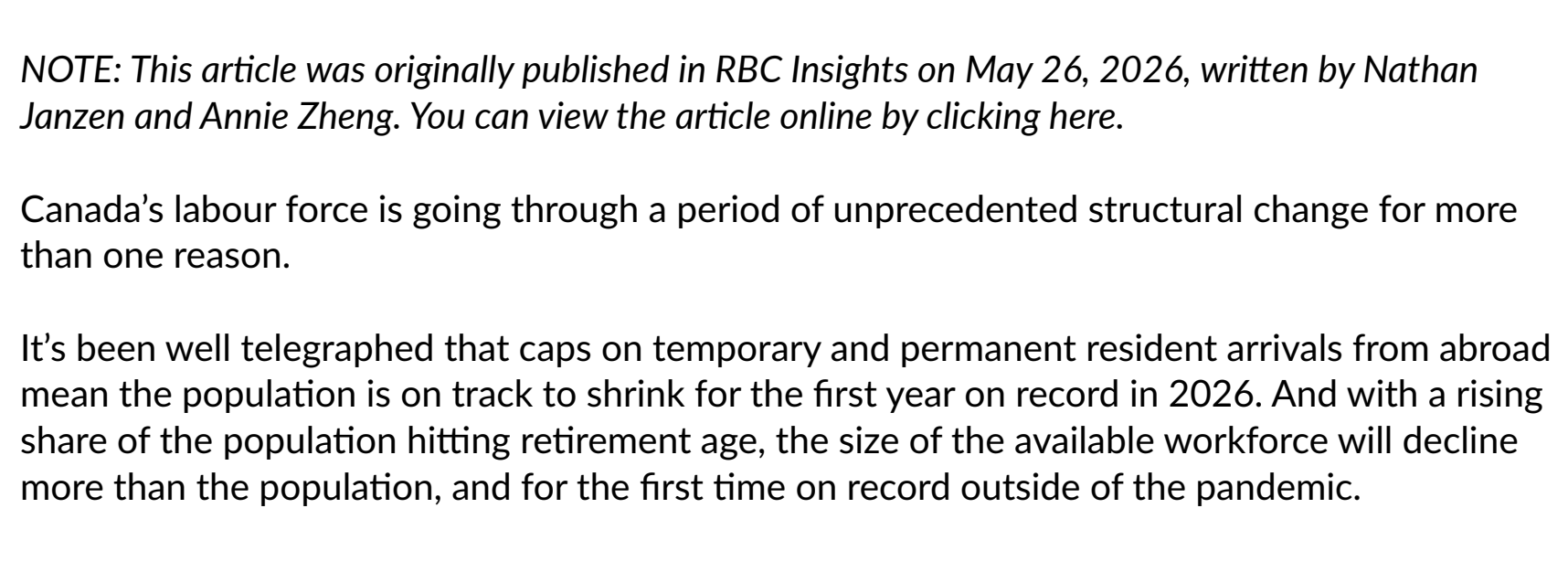
Holding a banner was Susan Heming, who has worked in oil and gas as well as the renewable industry for decades. She says she is tired of hearing grievances from Premier Smith, who has repeatedly bashed Ottawa for forcing a bad deal on Alberta.

"I would like to see some more new development, new technologies, just even an exploration of all that we can be, and you know how we can use oil and gas in different ways," she said, adding she was also opposed to Alberta's moratorium on clean energy projects in 2023.

"She's always complaining, we don't have this, we don't have that," said Heming, who said she has voted for certain Progressive Conservative governments in the past. "And in fact, I used to work for a regulator, and guess what, there was a ton of pipelines approved during the Liberal period.

"What I've observed is that people who lean more on grievance... they tend to be less fresh on ideas."

Canada's Looming Labour Squeeze



NOTE: This article was originally published in RBC Insights on May 26, 2026, written by Nathan Janzen and Annie Zheng. You can view the article online by clicking here.

Canada's labour force is going through a period of unprecedented structural change for more than one reason.

It's been well telegraphed that caps on temporary and permanent resident arrivals from abroad mean the population is on track to shrink for the first year on record in 2026. And with a rising share of the population hitting retirement age, the size of the available workforce will decline more than the population, and for the first time on record outside of the pandemic.

The unemployment rate remaining high following the Bank of Canada's 2023-24 tightening cycle and disruptions from U.S. tariffs, giving policymakers room to maintain restrictive caps on immigration for now. But under the surface, longer-run structural headwinds against labour supply are building.

We have noted this trend creates an unusual combination: Less job growth (even potentially small declines) would still be sufficient for per-worker labour market conditions to improve with the unemployment rate drifting lower – i.e., Canada's "breakeven" employment rate has declined sharply.

And we pointed out the growing fiscal costs of an aging population over time with a rising share of the population retired, and no longer contributing as much to the current government revenue base but still consuming and utilizing public services.

What has received less attention is the extent to which Canada (like virtually all other advanced economies) relies on immigration to fuel labour force growth.

Without immigration, Canada's population of potential younger workers (under age 35) would outright decline into the 2030s, while retirements of older workers remain at record-highs. Current immigration restrictions are expected to ultimately be relaxed as the goals of reducing the temporary resident share of the population are approached, but it's not likely enough to fully offset structural labour supply headwinds in the future.

That's a good thing for workers. It means pockets of labour market weakness – particularly challenges for younger workers finding first jobs – will ease.

But, for businesses it also means that labour shortages will, eventually, return once the unusually high level of unemployment is absorbed.

Retirements are at a structural high with monthly retirements climbing to roughly 0.12% of the labour force – about 25,500 workers per month. That's nearly double two decades ago when retirements averaged closer to 14,000 per month.

This has long been expected as the large post-WWII baby boomer generation hit retirement age in greater numbers. That wave may have peaked, but it has not yet crested, and likely won't into the 2030s.

The youngest baby boomers will turn 65 in 2029 (70 in 2034), so the current wave of retirements has further room to run.

Retirements tend to begin edging higher for workers over the age of 55, and peak between 65 and 69. But, a significant share of the population works longer – the immigrant population (which accounts for 28.4% of Canada's workforce) has tended to retire later.

Population aging (and resulting retirements) has already reduced the labour force participation rate (the share of the population aged 15 and older working or looking for work) by 4.5 percentage points from two decades ago. It will continue to push the share of the population available to work lower in the decade ahead.

The reality is, like virtually all other advanced economies, Canada's "working age" population will decline in the absence of immigration.

The number of children per woman fell sharply following the post WWII baby boom, and has been below typical population replacement rates for decades.

The population in each age cohort up to age 35 is smaller than the next. In other words, the supply of potential new younger workers will shrink without immigration at the same time a historically high share of the workforce leaves for retirement.

This is already happening now. The population under the age of 35 declined by a record 120,500 from a year ago in April. The available workforce under age 35 is down 76,000 despite a small increase in the share of younger people who are working or actively looking for work (unemployed).

Part of that more recent decline in the younger worker workforce is tied to a net outflow of temporary residents, but without any impact from immigration, the population aged 15-34 would decline by roughly 186,000 per year over the next five years (roughly 15,500 per month), according to our estimates.

Without significant changes in age-specific labour force participation rates, available workers under-35 would fall by about 139,000 per year (roughly 11,600 per month on average) over the next five years.

This is all while workers continue to retire in record numbers at the other end of the age distribution.

With youth unemployment rates still in the double-digits, declines in the size of the labour force shouldn't create a significant challenge for businesses looking to hire in the near term, and that's a good thing for new job searchers who have struggled to find work in recent years.

But, challenges tied to a shrinking supply of new workers will build as per-worker labour markets improve (i.e., the unemployment rate declines). Ultimately, current caps on immigration may need to be eased after the temporary resident population approaches the federal government's target of 5% of the total population. We expect this will be reached around mid-2027.

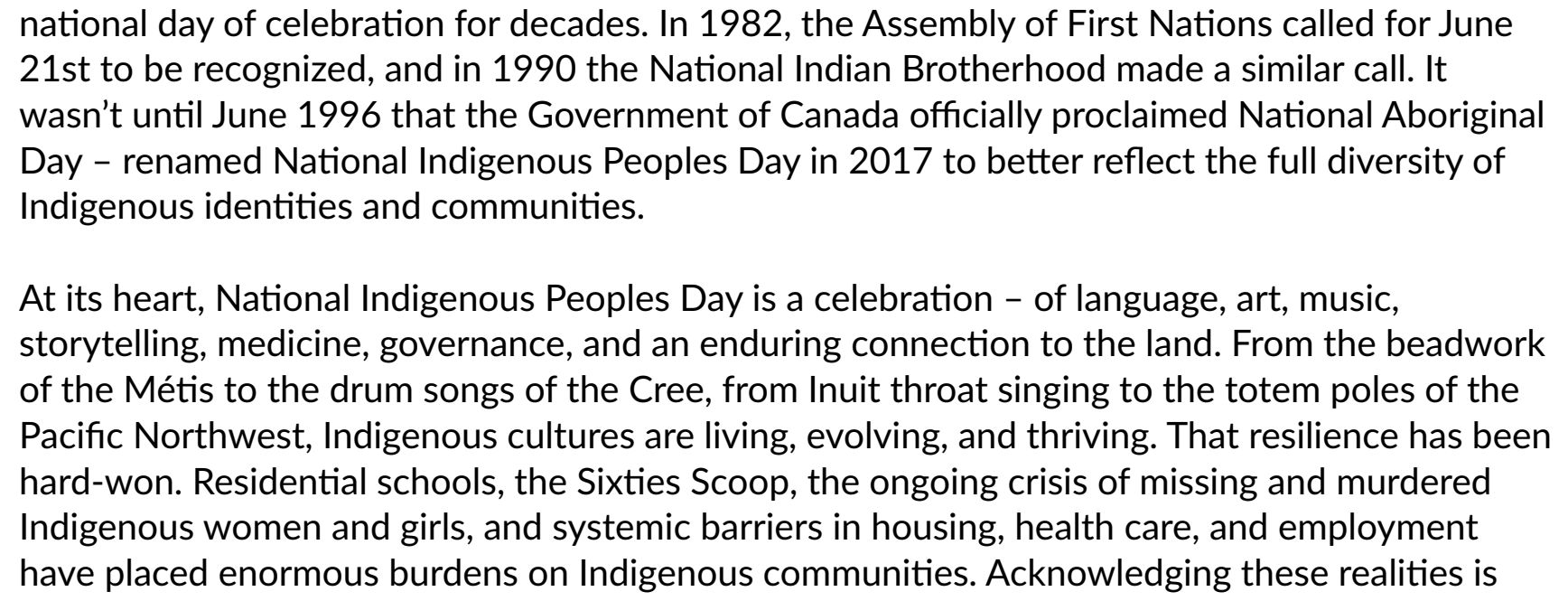
Indeed, there have been early signs of some pockets of labour shortages that either never went away or are emerging again.

About 17% of firms in Canadian Federation of Independent Business surveys still report shortages of un/semi-skilled workers. That sits well below 40% plus peaks in 2022, but is already tracking around pre-pandemic norms – and doing so while the unemployment rate is still elevated.

About a fifth of businesses in the Bank of Canada's Business Outlook Survey also reported labour shortages, and they expect the intensity of those shortages to edge higher.

Labour shortages are not (and won't be) evenly distributed across the economy, but some sectors – including accommodation, food services and construction – still report labour shortages more frequently as an obstacle to growth near term over demand for their products.

Honouring Every Step of the Journey: National Indigenous Peoples Day June 21st



Each year on June 21st, Canadians are invited to recognize and celebrate the cultures, contributions, and resilience of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples. For union members, this day carries particular meaning – the labour movement and Indigenous peoples share a long history of fighting for dignity, rights, and a fair share of the prosperity their work helped build.

The date itself is no accident. June 21st is the summer solstice, a day of deep spiritual and cultural significance for many Indigenous communities across Turtle Island. Long before it became an official observance, Indigenous peoples marked the longest day of the year with ceremony, celebration, and gathering. Choosing this date was itself an act of recognition – an acknowledgment that Indigenous traditions predate and extend far beyond the boundaries of the Canadian state.

The road to official recognition was a long one. Indigenous organizations had advocated for a national day of celebration for decades. In 1982, the Assembly of First Nations called for June 21st to be recognized, and in 1990 the National Indian Brotherhood made a similar call. It wasn't until June 1996 that the Government of Canada officially proclaimed National Aboriginal Day – renamed National Indigenous Peoples Day in 2017 to better reflect the full diversity of Indigenous identities and communities.

At its heart, National Indigenous Peoples Day is a celebration – of language, art, music, storytelling, medicine, governance, and an enduring connection to the land. From the beadwork of the Métis to the drum songs of the Cree, from Inuit throat singing to the totem poles of the Pacific Northwest, Indigenous cultures are living, evolving, and thriving. That resilience has been hard-won. Residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, the ongoing crisis of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls, and systemic barriers in housing, health care, and employment have placed enormous burdens on Indigenous communities. Acknowledging these realities is part of what makes June 21st meaningful – celebration and truth-telling go hand in hand.

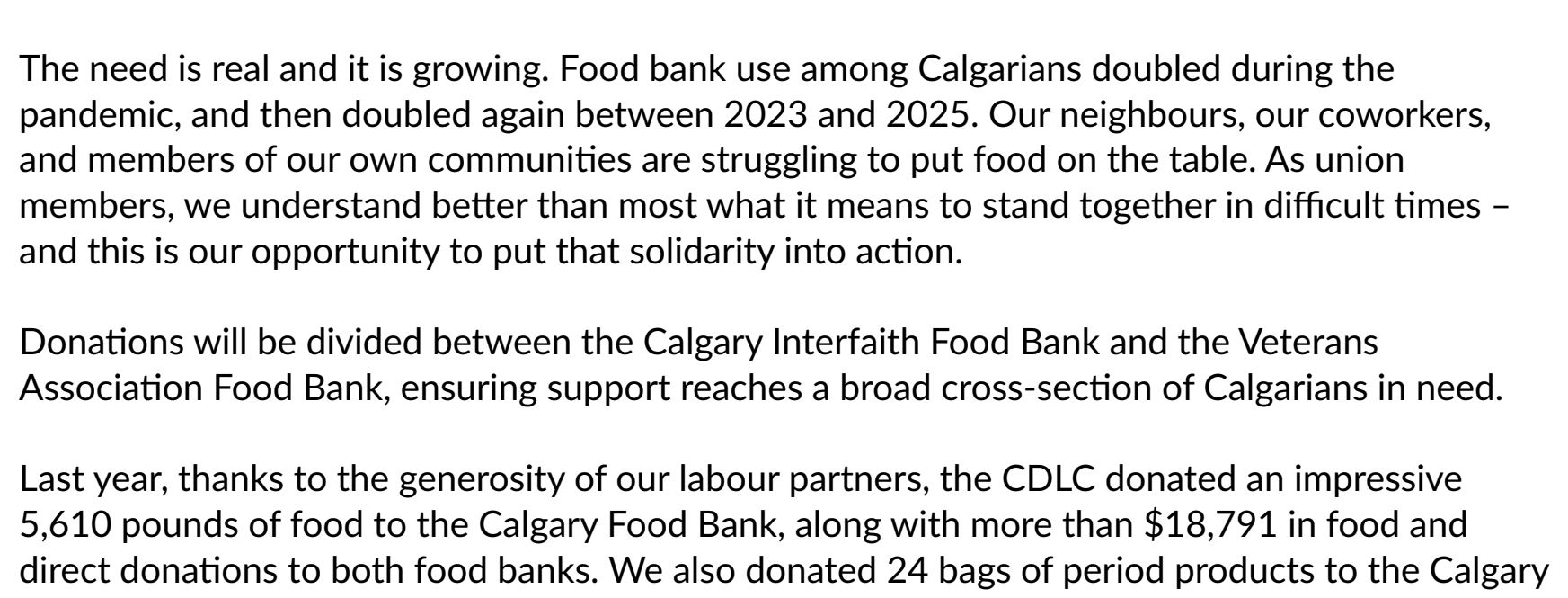
Indigenous workers are an important and growing part of Canada's workforce – and of our union. Yet they continue to face disproportionate rates of unemployment, underemployment, and workplace discrimination. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action speak directly to the role employers, governments, and institutions like unions must play in closing these gaps.

Many cities across Alberta and Canada hold free public events on or around June 21st – powwows, round dances, cultural demonstrations, and community feasts. We encourage all members to attend a local event and listen with an open mind and heart, to learn about the Indigenous peoples on whose territory they live and work, and to read or revisit the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action. Supporting Indigenous-owned businesses and artists, and reflecting on what reconciliation means in your own workplace and daily life, are meaningful steps anyone can take.

The labour movement was built on the belief that working people are stronger together – that solidarity across difference is not just an ideal but a practice. National Indigenous Peoples Day is an opportunity to deepen that practice, to stand alongside Indigenous coworkers, neighbours, and community members, and to recommit to the shared work of building a more just and equitable Canada.

Meegwetch. Hiy hiy. Marsee. Thank you.

Labour Day Food Drive – September 7, 2026



This Labour Day, the Calgary & District Labour Council (CDLC) is asking union members across the city to come together for a cause that hits close to home. On September 7th, 2026, the CDLC will be holding its annual Labour Day Food Drive – and we want this year to be our biggest yet.

The need is real and it is growing. Food bank use among Calgarians doubled during the pandemic, and then doubled again between 2023 and 2025. Our neighbours, our coworkers, and members of our own communities are struggling to put food on the table. As union members, we understand better than most what it means to stand together in difficult times – and this is our opportunity to put that solidarity into action.

Donations will be divided between the Calgary Interfaith Food Bank and the Veterans Association Food Bank, ensuring support reaches a broad cross-section of Calgarians in need.

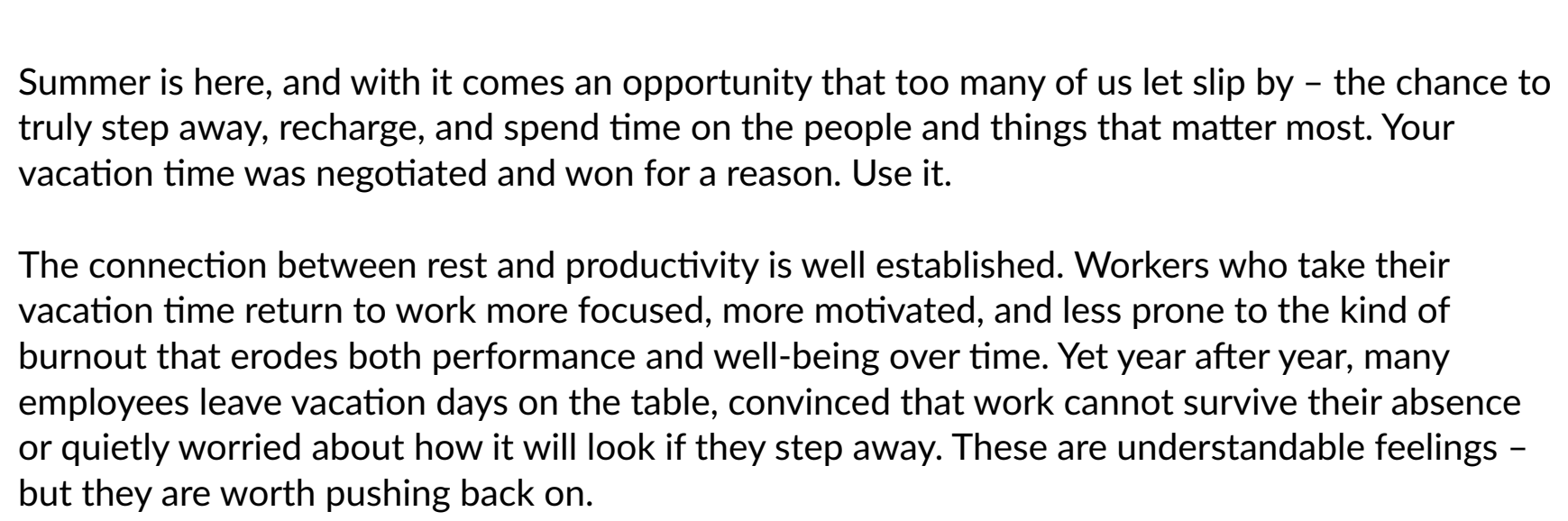
Last year, thanks to the generosity of our labour partners, the CDLC donated an impressive 5,610 pounds of food to the Calgary Food Bank, along with more than $18,791 in food and direct donations to both food banks. We also donated 24 bags of period products to the Calgary Women's Centre. Those are numbers to be proud of – and this year, we want to beat them.

There are several ways to get involved. Many unions are setting up collection sites in their workplaces, making it easy for members to contribute. On Labour Day itself, the CDLC will be open from 10 AM to 2 PM to receive donations. For those who would prefer to drop off ahead of time, the CDLC office will be open for donation drop-offs from 11 AM to 7 PM on August 25, 26, and 27, and again on September 1, 2, and 3. All donations will be delivered to the Food banks on September 3rd.

And here is a little extra incentive this year: any union or individual who donates food or money will be entered into a draw for a very special prize – the chance to throw a pie in President Shevalier's face on September 12th at 10 a.m. All in the name of a good cause, of course.

Every can, every dollar, and every bag makes a difference. If you have questions or would like to organize a collection site at your workplace, please reach out to President Alexander Shevalier at 403-819-4159 or president@thecdlc.ca.

Make the Most of Your Summer



Summer is here, and with it comes an opportunity that too many of us let slip by – the chance to truly step away, recharge, and spend time on the people and things that matter most. Your vacation time was negotiated and won for a reason. Use it.

The connection between rest and productivity is well established. Workers who take their vacation time return to work more focused, more motivated, and less prone to the kind of burnout that erodes both performance and well-being over time. Yet year after year, many employees leave vacation days on the table, convinced that work cannot survive their absence or quietly worried about how it will look if they step away. These are understandable feelings – but they are worth pushing back on.

Our collective agreement exists, in part, to protect your right to time away from work. The vacation entitlements our union negotiated are not a perk or a privilege – they are a recognized part of your total compensation, earned through your labour and your contributions to your workplace. Taking your vacation is not slacking off. It is exercising a right that workers before you fought hard to secure.

Work-life balance looks different for everyone. For some, summer means a family road trip or a week at the lake. For others, it means catching up on sleep, tending a garden, or simply having long evenings with nowhere to be. There is no wrong way to rest. What matters is that the time is genuinely yours – free from the pull of work emails, unfinished tasks, and the habit of always being available.

That last point is worth dwelling on. The boundaries between work and personal time have grown increasingly blurred in recent years, particularly with the rise of remote work and the expectation of constant digital availability. Many workers feel pressure – spoken or unspoken – to remain reachable even when they are off the clock. This is a workplace issue, not a personal failing, and it is one that unions are actively working to address. Several jurisdictions across Canada have introduced or are considering right-to-disconnect legislation, and many unions have begun negotiating language that protects members' off-hours time.

In the meantime, there are practical steps you can take to protect your own time this summer. Book your vacation days early. Set an out-of-office message and mean it. Resist the urge to check in. Trust your colleagues, and trust that the workplace will manage without you – because it will.

If you have vacation days remaining and have not yet made plans, now is the time. Talk to your supervisor, review your collective agreement, and take what is yours. You have earned it.

The labour movement has always understood that a good life is about more than a paycheque. It is about having the time and the freedom to actually live. This summer, we encourage every member to honour that principle – for yourself, for your family, and for the generations of workers who fought to make rest a right rather than a luxury.

Enjoy your summer. You deserve it.

Stay Strong and See You Next Month!

Sincerely,

Your Executive Team

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