

## **Edmonton Superstore Mediation Completed – Membership Meetings Coming!**

Edmonton mediation for a new Superstore and Liquorstore collective agreement is over.

Calgary mediation has been extended to September 5<sup>th</sup>, when mediation for Fort McMurray, Grande Prairie, Lloydminster, Camrose, Red Deer, Medicine Hat and Lethbridge, is scheduled to commence.

Under Alberta law, mandatory non-binding mediation, a mandatory delay period, and a variety of other obstacles, often create hurdles for Unions in their goal to achieve new collective agreements. But the conclusion of Edmonton mediation should open the door for forthcoming meetings for Edmonton Union members and a possible strike vote.

Union lawyers are currently working with Union negotiators to finalize a democratic process for Union members to review and make decisions about a company offer of settlement. Stand by to have your say in September! A company offer of settlement is also on the table for other Alberta locations, but once again, mediation for those locations has not yet been concluded. Unfortunately, all of the offers share most, if not all, of the negative characteristics of the Edmonton offer.

The Edmonton and area, and other offers have been glossed up by the company with some retro pay, but have a lot of serious problems which the company isn't talking about. Superstore employees on the Union's bargaining committee recommend rejection of the offer as it is a cheap, short sighted company attempt to buy employees off with a quick buck in the hope that workers will forget about real wage, benefit and rights issues.

For example, the offers potentially strip employees of all sorts of premiums – night, day, weekend, available anytime, etc – which form a large part of employees' compensation. This puts employees at risk of huge hourly rate rollbacks. As an example, night premiums will only be insulated in the contract at \$2.00 per hour. Many employees in Alberta get \$4.00 or \$5.00 an hour premiums for night work. Will you accept a retro cheque – chewed away by the tax department-and risk a loss of \$3.00 an hour in premiums for a lousy 50 cent an hour increase this year?

This is just one example of the reality and truth about the company's offer for many – an offer that does not match the one that was negotiated for Safeway employees – who voted by an overwhelming majority for a strike as leverage before settling. It treats Superstore employees as second-rate retail employees! Maybe a first-rate strike vote will change that situation!!!!

When Superstore tells you how great their offer is – remember to read the fine print! And remember who you work for.

Loblaws – Superstore's parent company, recently reported an 18% increase in profit with revenues of BILLIONS. Galen Weston, a nice gentleman no doubt, is from a Billionaire family, enjoying profit generated from every minute of work you perform. Loblaws answers to shareholders and looks for ways to profit. Employees know that “colleagues” is a word assigned to try to convince them that they are somehow equal to the bigshots in the hopes that no one makes a big fuss about the fact that they can no longer afford groceries, rent, tuition or a tank of gas!

Loblaws shortsighted pursuit of profit has in fact found them in violation of the law. Recently Loblaws in Alberta was found by the Alberta Labour Board to have misrepresented facts to its employees and to have engaged in manipulating its workforce. In bargaining with your Union last time the company, the Labour Board found, essentially made unlawful promises to its staff, attempting to divide and conquer and sow the seeds of dissent among employees. The company's record of “guilt” of these unfair Labour practices is well documented and they face a variety of additional charges of unfair labour practices before the Labour Board right now. The Weston family claims to care about ethics – except perhaps insofar as their own employees are concerned!!!

At Edmonton mediation, Union negotiators grilled the company about their offer. It is simply not clear. Apparent loopholes and ambiguities caused the company to scramble to try to clarify a confusing and difficult document. Union negotiators wonder whether or not the company could even come through on its own offer, given its pathetic payroll system. If I agreed to the offer, one commentator wondered, would I even see a change in my pay cheque? They can't even get it right now! Fix your payroll system immediately.....Union negotiators and employees insisted in addressing the company!

Union officials do not believe that this offer is a good one. Certain improvements have been fought for and achieved by your Union negotiators but the real power of potential change now belongs to you. Soon you will be asked to participate in a voting process. You should attend all Union meetings, read the fine print, and decide for yourself. Union staff does not get a vote, and after months of frustrating negotiations, no one can accuse Union leaders of trying to rush into a strike.

Will you accept this deal? It is the company's first offer – will it be their “final” as they assert? Will you threaten to strike in a strike vote to try to improve their offer and just get a little respect? Do you agree with those who call for a united fight back?

Your Union Representatives are trying to get these questions in front of you in the next few weeks ... hopefully the company and bad Alberta Labour laws won't frustrate the process anymore!

Let's hear the voices of Superstore and Liquorstore employees!