

LOCAL 401 REJECTS COMPANY OFFER!

Negotiations for a new Collective Agreement for PTI-Buffalo Métis Catering Lodges continued in Edmonton from Aug 17 – 20, 2010.

As expected, and as your Union requested, the Company put a comprehensive offer on the table for a new Collective Agreement.

Your Union negotiating committee rejected it immediately and provided the Company with a complete critique. Your Union bargaining committee views the offer as having a few positive elements but it falls far short of anything that could even be considered as worth bringing back to you for a vote.

The offer is a three year deal with some monetary improvements. But Union negotiators told the Company that “they weren’t on the playing field yet”. In fact Union chief negotiator Tom Hesse told the Company that “they showed up for the hockey game wearing rubber boots”.

Local 401 raised over 25 problems with the Company offer to PTI’s negotiating team. The Company continues to insist that employees accept certain take aways. The Company wants employees to vacate their rooms if they are gone for more than seven days. The Company wants employees, if they stay “in camp” to pay \$50.00 a night for accommodation and meals. This is an increase of \$20.00 per day!

The Company wants to expose you to the possibility of completely turning your working life upside down on only 24 hours notice. Do you enjoy the money and regularity that comes with 21 and 7? The Company wants the right to change this with virtually no notice to a 10 and 4 system, perhaps a 4 and 3 system, or even maybe any other system that they choose at any time. They say that they will do what the client wants. Will you accept the contract only to be effectively fired from your job some weeks or months later?

Employees will be asking about retroactive pay. The Company is prepared to negotiate retroactive pay and have put this in their offer. Your Union bargaining committee has said that they will accept no contract without retro. We have worked hard to ensure that retroactive pay is on the table. The problem is, though that the wage offer, simply put, sucks. For example a Housekeeper that has not had a wage increase for over two years is being offered 62 cents to accept the deal. In 2011 that same Housekeeper, the Company says, can have another 42 cents. Other classifications in the Collective Agreement – and there are too many to go through here, are being offered the same percentage increases. Obviously, this is completely unacceptable. Your hard work needs to be properly rewarded!

Things are heating up. The Company has been given an opportunity to respond and bargaining dates are set for September 8 and 9, 2010. The Union bargaining committee will be watching carefully for the Company response. If the response is not appropriate,

the Union will be applying for a Government appointed mediator to be involved in the process. Under Alberta law this mediation process is mandatory before employees are allowed to take a strike vote.

We are committed to negotiating a fair contract without a strike, but employees should begin to arrange their finances in anticipation of a dispute, no matter how unlikely that is. This might not be a good time to make any major purchases or assume any debt that isn't absolutely necessary.

Be reminded that this is the time to be a strong Union member. This is the time to act with total solidarity. This is the time to stand up for yourself and each other. Don't let your Company divide and conquer!