

Baccarat Union Negotiations Commence

Union negotiations for a new contract for Baccarat employees started on December 14th.

Bargaining took place at the Mayfield Inn. The company bargaining team was comprised of, Trevor West, Vice President of Human Resources, Rhonda Woychuk, Alberta Director of Human Resources, Heath Clegg, Baccarat Casino Manager and Jessi Duffy, Human Resources Coordinator. The company advised the union that they would be bringing more company officials to the bargaining table in the future.

The union negotiating committee was made up of, Raymond Chiu, Stanley Poon, Olga Anderson and Chris Sattler. They were accompanied by Christine McMeckan, Union Representative and Thomas Hesse, Union Negotiator. The union will be adding more Baccarat workers to its bargaining committee soon. From the union's point of view, the first order of business at the negotiating table was to insist that the future of the Baccarat Casino be addressed by Gateway. The union immediately wanted to talk about an assurance that Baccarat employees would be allowed to go to any new casino location. The union also argued that those who did not want to go to a new location should be entitled to some form of severance pay.

The company did not dismiss the union's proposal and suggested that the union craft some contract language to address this matter. It is important at this time that you advise the union immediately whether or not you want to work for Gateway at a new location. You will recall that the union has already asked you this question in a variety of written formats. If you have not yet done so you should, at the very least, provide the union with a letter regarding your feelings on an urgent and immediate basis. Do you want to work at a new location? If not, is it your preference to receive some sort of severance pay?

Further negotiations will occur regarding this issue at our next scheduled bargaining session with the company.

The tone of bargaining was very positive. In fact, the company has already agreed that Baccarat employees can have a new grievance procedure. If you are fired or disciplined, you now have the right, through the union, to challenge those actions. If the actions were taken unjustly the union will have your discipline removed and can even get your job back. You will be provided with a union lawyer at no cost. No one is saying that management cannot run their business but the union has been victorious in ensuring that no employee will get in trouble without representation. Work hard and be loyal to your company but be assured that as a result of unionisation, injustices will be prevented and there will be someone to stand there with you if you have been treated unfairly.

Bargaining discussions also focused on the future of the casino. We will have more to say about this later but suffice it to say that whether you have supported the union in the past or not, we are trying very hard to protect the future of the workers at Baccarat.

In January the union will be finalising its proposals for a new union contract. This is your last chance to get your survey in. Watch, as well, for union meetings in January to facilitate more discussion among employees on these important issues. The union and the company have both agreed to schedule at least 1 week per month in negotiation sessions with a view to bringing a contract to the employees of Baccarat in early summer if possible.

It is important that you get to know your bargaining committee members. They have volunteered to represent the employees of Baccarat in official negotiations with Gateway Casinos. Ask them their opinions about the bargaining process. Give them your input as often as you can.

We are very excited and we are on our way to making Baccarat a better workplace! Watch for updates on our website, www.gounion.ca and click on your own Baccarat section.

Sincerely,

Your union bargaining committee