

McKesson Members Ratify New Contract

Edmonton workers return to work next week with better wages and benefits

Edmonton – September 3, 2010

UFCW Canada, Local 401 members voted last Wednesday (September 1) to end their 66-day strike at the Edmonton McKesson warehouses and to ratify a new contract. The new agreement was hammered out after McKesson and the Union agreed to restart negotiations in late August. Members voted overwhelmingly in favour of the new deal which contained significant improvements to the company's previous contract offer—twice rejected by the membership before going out on strike on June 28, 2010.

Improvements to the new 40-month contract going forward include significantly improved wage increases for the Edmonton McKesson workers which were, until now, the lowest paid McKesson workers in the province. While still not receiving the highest wages, Edmonton McKesson workers were very pleased with the progress achieved by the Union in this new and improved deal. Other highlights include significant improvements on two other key sticking points for the members—vision care and dental benefits. At the same time, the Union successfully fought off a number of employer concessions including the lengthening of the wage progression scale. The new deal not only maintained the old wage progression (time needed to reach the top rate in a classification) for one classification, but eliminated the wage progression for two other classifications. The Union also achieved a significant improvement to the employees' retroactive pay over the last company offer.

McKesson's Edmonton employees (Union and Management) all attended re-orientation sessions yesterday in preparation for a smooth return to work for the vast majority of Union members next week.

THANKS FOR THE SUPPORT

UFCW Canada, Local 401 and its Edmonton McKesson members would like to extend our sincere appreciation to all the Unions, Organizations, and people that visited the line, walked the line, barbequed on the line, donated to the line, reported about the line, or simply honked their horn when passing the line. Your support was truly appreciated and deeply moved the members of McKesson Edmonton who now have a greater understanding and appreciation for their own Union, as well as the enormous strength of the Alberta labour movement, and all of its allies.

And finally, a special note to the Edmonton Police Service ("EPS") and their 'labour dispute' liaisons that provided very professional and courteous service throughout the labour dispute. Often, police forces receive criticism for failing to understand the context of labour disputes and the plight of labour. While occasions requiring the presence of the EPS were extremely sparse, the McKesson workers felt that it was necessary to recognize the balanced and impartial service provided by the EPS to both sides during the strike, which can be difficult at times.