



POWERWORKS

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November 2014 **POWER WORKERS' UNION NEWSLETTER**

The PWU Signs Transition Agreement to Guide Merger of Two Agencies

On October 30, the PWU, along with the Society of Energy Professionals, signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO) and the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) that establishes a framework for the transition of employees resulting from the merger of the two agencies scheduled for January 1, 2015.



Don MacKinnon, PWU President

The new agency will be known as the IESO. The merger was announced in the July provincial budget with the declared aims of increasing efficiencies and containing costs. The possibility of a merger has been discussed for some time and was first announced by the McGuinty government in 2012.



The IESO coordinates Ontario's electricity needs, balancing the supply of power with demand and directing the flow of electricity from various generation sources across the province's grid of transmission lines. The OPA is a long-term planning agency that signs contracts, up to 20 years in length, with electricity generators, including nuclear, natural gas, hydroelectric, wind and solar power companies.

This important agreement will ensure a stable transition of OPA employees into the PWU and Society bargaining units at the IESO. This is the best possible outcome for all involved and it was achieved without having to take the issue to the Ontario Labour Relations Board for a less predictable arbitrated decision. The MOA respects the rights of all union members and was reached through a cooperative tripartite process intended to minimize any potential disruption to employees.

Under the MOA, the IESO collective agreements for both the PWU and the Society will apply to both IESO and OPA employees. IESO employees will remain in the IESO Pension Plan and OPA employees will maintain their current pension benefit formula and contribution rate as they existed on December 31, 2014. Discussions regarding integration of OPA employees into the IESO Plan will be completed by the end of 2015. New hires on or after January 1, 2015 will be eligible to participate in the IESO Pension Plan.



The IESO may offer a Voluntary Separation Package (VSP) or a bridge to retirement to a small number of PWU members in areas identified as containing redundancies.

According to the MOA, the seniority of all IESO and OPA employees represented by the PWU and the Society respectively will be dove-tailed based on years of service at the IESO and OPA respectively.

OPA employees who move to the IESO will maintain their current classifications and pay rates. The parties will strike two joint teams (one with the PWU and one with the Society) to map OPA job descriptions and pay scales using the job evaluation mechanism known as Plan B.

Don MacKinnon
President

Sector 1 Update from Bob Walker, PWU Vice President

We all face common challenges regardless of whether we are public or private sector, provincial or federal jurisdiction, generation or transmission/distribution, nuclear or non-nuclear. Attacks on Labour, attacks on our job security, attacks on our pensions, attacks on the industry in which we work and the pressure to move from best practices to minimum compliance affect all of us. We are much stronger when we work and stand together.



Health and Safety

Overall, we still have relatively high standards of safety with the employers in our sector but we have concerns. Let's not forget the health and safety standards of Ontario Hydro's earlier years when we suffered multiple workplace fatalities annually. We've come a long way but we need to work diligently to maintain and improve on today's position. Some of our employers appear to be moving to a mindset of minimum compliance with standards. We have a long history of leading the way toward safer workplaces and setting the standards and we have no intention of changing direction now. We've also seen shifting approaches from the Ministry of Labour, which are not always helpful for our members.

Constant change in the business operations of our employers and concerns about employment security can distract us from working safely. It can also cause reluctance to raise concerns including health and safety issues. We all need to watch for this problem. Our safety is dependent on our questioning attitudes and learning from our mistakes. No one should ever be reluctant to raise a safety concern and the time to raise the issue is before someone gets hurt. When anyone raises a concern, the PWU will stand with them and give them our support.

We all owe a lot of thanks to the hard-working PWU members of our various Joint Health and Safety Committees for keeping on top of the issues. We will continue to provide as much support to them as they need.

Nuclear Regulatory Affairs

The PWU and the Canadian Nuclear Workers' Council (CNWC) work closely together to coordinate

our activities in regulatory proceedings. We participate regularly in hearings and meetings with the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC). We participated in the CNSC Staff 2013 Integrated Safety Assessment of Canadian Nuclear Power Plants and that process produced a very positive report. We meet annually with the CNSC President and Senior CNSC Staff. This year's meeting takes place this month in Ottawa.

Bruce Power and Ontario Power Generation's (OPG) Darlington Generating Station were both granted license extensions and their Power Reactor Operating Licence hearings were postponed until next year.

In September, we made another presentation to the Joint Review Panel for the Environmental Assessment for OPG's Deep Geological Low Level Waste Repository (DGR). The Panel launched this second round of hearings after two incidents at the US Department of Energy's Waste Isolation Pilot Plant facility in New Mexico. The anti-nuclear lobby is very active in these hearings and there has been a lot of misinformation distributed.

The PWU has submitted comments on a number of discussion papers put out for review by the CNSC such as fitness for duty, safety culture, environmental assessments and human performance (managing worker fatigue and hours of work). We will continue to review and comment on these documents as required. In January, we will attend a CNSC workshop on worker fatigue.

Bargaining



The OPG Collective Agreement expires on March 31, 2015. Preparations for bargaining are well underway. There will be a focus on the long-term staffing plan and preparations for the end of Pickering's Commercial Operations.

The Bruce Power Collective Agreement was ratified in early 2014. Since then the Bruce Power Chief Stewards, supported by the PWU Office, worked through a series of mutual gains based discussions with the company. Those discussions resulted in agreements that will help enable the refurbishment of the Bruce Units 3 to 8 and the long-term success of the Bruce site.

The AECL Collective Agreement was ratified in May. AECL has since been renamed Canadian Nuclear Laboratories in preparation for the move to a new Government-Owned/Contractor-Operated model. AECL's employees will be moving to the new operating company. We will meet with the contractor as soon as it is named. The transition for employees is not fully mapped out as yet and the uncertainty has been heightened by the federal government taking the position that employees will be forced to leave the Federal Public Service Pension Plan.

We will be negotiating on behalf of the COMPASS Foods Unit at Darlington in December and the COMPASS Foods Unit at Bruce Power next fall.

Negotiations with both NUVIA Canada (nuclear services company) and Canadian Nuclear Partners (a wholly owned subsidiary of OPG) are currently underway. The collective agreements for both AMEC Nuclear Safety Solutions and the Nuclear Waste Management Organization expire on March 31, 2015. We will begin preparations for bargaining early in the New Year.

Conclusion

History has shown us that change is inevitable and the pace of change seems to be accelerating. The nuclear sector is no exception and we need to be prepared to anticipate developments in order to respond effectively. With the future of the industry under constant scrutiny, advocates for competing technologies and anti-nuclear critics seem to get louder all the time. We all need to engage in the debate.

The strength of any union lies with its membership so it is important that the PWU does its best to keep members informed so you can become more engaged. The challenges we face require us to work together, to support one another and to understand our common purpose. Good communication is essential.

We will work hard to protect and build on the contractual rights that have been earned over many years of hard work.

We know that change, even change for the better, can be very disrupting and distracting in the workplace so let's make sure we stick to the basics and always put health and safety at the top of the priority list.

Sector 2 Update from Brad Carnduff, PWU Vice President

The structure of Sector 2 has changed. This time last year I reported that our numbers would be dropping. Lambton and Nanticoke have completed their generator shutdowns as a result of the government's off-coal strategy and we have shutdown PWU Sector 2 Units 3, 4, 5 and 6 that represented those members. The remaining members at those plants have been amalgamated with Sector 2, Unit 10 at the Niagara Plant Group.



Ontario Power Generation (OPG)

OPG continues to have many challenges. The company is feeling financial pressure from their shrinking generation footprint as well as from the shareholder - the Ontario government - to cut costs. There are also plenty of rumours floating around about the potential sale of the property and building at 700 University Avenue. As we speak, we are having discussions about the potential movement of some of the staff to other locations following the provisions of the collective agreement. The attendant uncertainty is frustrating, to say the least, for our members employed at that location. I continue to commit to those members that we will be fully engaged to ensure they are afforded all the rights currently provided by the collective agreement.

OPG Thermal

OPG is in the final phases of the off-coal strategy. Earlier in the summer, the company announced that it had burned the remaining coal from the last bunker at Thunder Bay Generating Station (GS). The GS is in the process of converting to advanced biomass as their fuel source.

Atikokan GS is now using biomass as their sole fuel source and we are hopeful that it will continue to be successful, not only for our members employed there, but for the community that would have

been devastated had that plant been shut down.

All but about 45 of our members at the Lambton and Nanticoke GSs have either redeployed elsewhere in OPG non-nuclear or taken voluntary severance packages as per the coal closure mid-term agreement. Both plants are now or soon will be in a caretaker mode while the government determines the future of electricity for the province. We are still hopeful that at some point those plants could be restarted using an alternate fuel source such as biomass, natural gas or some combination thereof.

OPG Hydroelectric

OPG remains committed to the hydroelectric piece of their business and continues to make investments to ensure the long-term viability of their assets. Most hydroelectric locations have received some redeployed members from the closing coal plants. It has been challenging but the skill sets that these members brought with them to their new work locations have proved to be valuable to the employer. They have been made to feel welcome in their new workplaces and host communities.

New Horizon System Solutions

OPG has entered into a Request for Proposals process for the services that New Horizon System Solutions provides. We have met with the management of two of the bidders and we are closely watching to see the end result. As always, we will do our utmost to ensure that members' rights and their collective agreement are protected no matter who the successful bidder may be.

Gas Plants and Non-OPG Hydroelectric

In the last year, we have successfully negotiated collective agreements with Portlands Energy Centre and Atlantic Power. We achieved three-year deals with economic increases between 2.5 and 2.75 percent with benefit improvements and no concessions. Ratification numbers of between 80 percent and 100 percent indicate that our members are satisfied with our efforts. We were successful in securing economic increases for our members at Brighton Beach Power and the new collective agreement was ratified by 59 percent of the membership.

I am happy to report that Sector 2 will be assuming the representation of the generation group at Great Lakes Power.

One area of concern for us is the government's reluctance to renew long-term contracts some of our natural gas generators. Lake Superior Power could not secure an Ontario Power Authority (OPA) Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) and, regrettably, the company has chosen to lay off our members there. The plant will be put into a state of preservation meaning that it could reopen at some point in the future. Similarly, Atlantic Power was unable to secure a PPA for its Tunis Power Plant and it too will be closing and laying off the employees. We have written numerous letters to Minister Chiarelli in support of renewed OPA contracts. We are hopeful that with the government's long-term mandate in place they will get down to business and negotiate power purchase contract renewals so that these facilities will continue to operate and our members can enjoy some work life stability.

Sector 3 Update from Mel Hyatt, PWU Vice President

Sector 3 of the PWU has reached some significant agreements with Hydro One within the last month. The parties have concluded a long-term staffing agreement for Provincial Lines, which will see new apprentices taken on in the Hiring Hall to replace the ones hired into regular PWU positions. Agreement has also been reached with Provincial Stations on the numbers of regular and apprentice positions for Regional Maintainers Electrical and Regional Maintainers Cable Spicer.



Discussions continue with Vertex and Inergi in regards to the Request For Proposal released by Hydro One. Hydro One tendered the work carried out by these two companies and the PWU subsequently negotiated successor rights arrangements with Hydro One and the bidders involved in the process. Hydro One is expected to make its decisions on the bidders' proposals by the end of the year.

Hydro One continues on the acquisitions path and has reached agreements to buy Norfolk Power, Haldimand County Power and Woodstock Hydro. The Ontario Energy Board (OEB) approved the acquisition of Norfolk Power on August 29 and the approvals for Haldimand and Woodstock are working their way through the OEB process. On October 30, Cambridge and North Dumfries Hydro (Energy +) received OEB approval to purchase Brant County Power. The PWU is in discussions with both companies to ensure the smooth transition of PWU members to the new employer.

Collective agreement negotiations are continuing with the Independent Electricity System Operator and dates have been set for talks with Entegrus (Middlesex) for this November. In 2015, Sector 3 has 11 sets of negotiations to complete.

Sector 3 has seen three Chief/Principal Stewards move on to other things in recent months. Long-time elected representative Danny Farrell (Unit 17) retired from Hydro One and was profiled in the October Newsletter. Bruce Newton has been elected as Danny's successor. Andrea Plumb, Chief Steward for Unit 30 (South Western Utilities) and Principal Steward at London Hydro, resigned to further her education. She has been replaced as Chief Steward by Ann Paquette who works at EARTH Holdings and by Pam Rafiero as Principal Steward at London Hydro. Rudy Kerec, Chief Steward from Hydro One Unit 2 decided to move on to a new phase in his career and took a Union Trades Supervisor II position with Hydro One. Rudy has been replaced on a temporary basis by Marc Levesque. We thank Danny, Andrea and Rudy for their contribution as PWU representatives and wish them all the best with their future endeavours.

PWU Co-Hosts Queen’s Park Nuclear Reception



On October 27, the PWU along with the Organization of Canadian Nuclear Industries, the Society of Energy Professionals, and the Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario hosted an MPP Nuclear-Industry Reception at Queen’s Park. This special event was organized to give representatives from Ontario’s extensive nuclear industry the opportunity to meet face-to-face with their MPPs and to stress the

importance of the reactor refurbishments at OPG’s Darlington Nuclear Generating Station and Bruce Power. The featured speaker was the Minister of Energy, the Honorable Bob Chiarelli, who spoke in very positive terms about the value of the nuclear industry to Ontario. PWU President Don MacKinnon introduced the Minister.



OPG Opens Two New Important Facilities in October



Pictured above, the new generating station under construction.

In October, Ontario Power Generation (OPG) announced that the first two units at the new Smoky Falls Generating Station (GS) had begun operation and that the Darlington Energy Complex (DEC) had opened. Both developments provide good news for the continued delivery of safe, reliable and emission-free electricity for decades to come.

When completed, the Smoky Falls units will provide a net increase of 215 megawatts (MW) of hydroelectric generation to OPG’s clean energy portfolio as part of the \$2.6 billion Lower Mattagami project in Northeastern Ontario.

One unit is still under construction and is expected to be completed this winter. At peak construction more than 1,600 people worked on the project. The new GS replaces an 88-year-old, 55 MW station that was not utilizing the full capacity of the water available.

The DEC was opened on October 30 by Energy Minister Bob Chiarelli and is a major component of the planned refurbishment of the four reactors at the Darlington Generating Station. That project along with the planned



The original Smoky Falls GS that is being decommissioned



refurbishment of six reactors at Bruce Power will ensure that nuclear power remains an important part of Ontario's electricity supply mix for decades to come. The DEC (pictured to the left) is a world-class training facility that includes a full-scale reactor mock up, warehouse space for equipment and training classrooms.

The facility will allow staff to practice the work, perfect the techniques and perform full "dress rehearsals," using actual tools and wearing protective equipment before they begin work inside the station.

It will help ensure that workers are trained and tested in a safe, realistic and controlled environment with all the obstacles, constraints and potential challenges they may face when they are in the station.

PWU Employers Win Safety Awards

In late October, two PWU employers were honoured with 2014 Canada's Safest Employers Awards. London Hydro took gold in the utilities and electrical category and PowerStream took gold in the wellness category and silver in the utilities and electrical category. PowerStream has now won awards in three consecutive years.

Launched by *Canadian Occupational Safety* magazine in 2011, Canada's Safest Employers Awards recognize companies from all across Canada with outstanding accomplishments in promoting the health and safety of their workers.



PWU Helps Host National Electric Utility Hockey Tournament

The Ontario Electric Utility Hockey Tournament organization and the Power Workers' Union hosted the 29th Canadian Electric Utility Hockey Tournament in Ottawa in mid-October. Sixteen teams from utilities across Canada competed including three teams of PWU members.

This year, Hydro One Huntsville, Hydro One Erie-Niagara and the Bruce Power Hitmen earned the right to participate by qualifying at the Ontario Tournament and all of our teams performed well.

Hydro One Huntsville put in a dominating performance and became this year's Tournament Champions (pictured below).

Game 1 saw them beat Enmax (Alberta) 7-1 and in the second game they downed the Manitoba Spurs with another 7-1 victory. In the A Division semi-finals they played Toronto Hydro, one of the tournament favourites, winning 3-1 in a hard fought game and scoring the insurance goal with one minute left on the clock.



In the A Finals Huntsville met Les Aigles de Montréal, last year's champions. Les Aigles had already defeated both Erie-Niagara and the Bruce Hitmen in earlier play.

The Huntsville team was flying this day and knocked off the defending champions with a 6-2 win, bringing the A Division Championship back to Ontario. Powerline technician Andy Self from Huntsville was voted the Tournament MVP.

Hydro One Erie-Niagara also had a very successful tournament, with wins over New Brunswick Sharks and Manitoba Power Kings before losing to Les Aigles 3-2 in the A Division semi-finals in what may have been the most exciting game of the tournament.

The Bruce Power Hitmen got past the Regina Blacklist (SaskPower) in the first game before losing to Les Aigles de Montreal in the second game, relegating them to the B Division.

They went on to win over the Manitoba Power Kings and in the final won in a shootout over the Hydro Quebec Predateurs to win the B Division Championship.

The Ontario Electric Utility Hockey Tournament was first played in 1975 and has grown to more than 60 teams participating each year. Over the past ten years, the tournament has raised over \$100,000 for children's charities.

Featured Photo:

Picture(s) submitted by PWU membership



Annette Taylor

*Office Support Representative II
performing non-traditional role of
Inspection and Maintenance
Technician - Trainee*

*Submitted by: Kim Doyle-Maloney,
Darlington*

You can forward your pictures to the PWU Communications Department
by email: comm@pwu.ca