



# LOCAL 276 NEWSLETTER



June 2020



## *Business Manager's Report*

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I hope you and your families are doing well in these exceedingly difficult times. Most of us have never been through times like these, so it has been a steep learning curve for all of us trying to navigate our way socially, financially, and mentally through this pandemic.

Since COVID-19 came upon us in the beginning of March, the main concern of the local was trying to get as much information out to the membership as quickly as possible. Because information was changing daily, we had to utilize electronic means like our web page and our Facebook page to react to the membership in a timely manner. Information on items such as workplace safety, financial aid, and mental health were published as soon as they were available.

On March 16<sup>th</sup> we closed the doors to walk-ins but continued to work from the office to make sure we were able to help with our members' concerns. In mid March, our membership went from 3% unemployment to 35% in just two weeks. Many members decided to self isolate and were unsure about safety on the job site. Working together with the BC Building Trades we were able to put pressure on WorkSafe BC to make sure contractors were providing a safe environment for our members to work, which included hand washing stations and cleaner bathroom facilities. After voicing our concerns, WorkSafe field officers travelled to over 1000 worksites to ensure jobsites were compliant. We have pushed for these changes for years and it's sad that we had to have a pandemic to see this come about. Moving forward, we need to stay vigilant to make sure we do not slip back and lose the ground we have gained.

With construction being deemed an essential service, I just wanted to thank all of our members who have braved this strange new world and have kept construction moving along. In many areas in Canada, they have shut construction down completely, and are finding it exceedingly difficult to get things moving again. This has resulted in having some people remain unemployed to a point where they are running out of benefits.

One area that was especially hard for our members was the decrease of naval work down at Seaspan. A very concentrated group of people working in very cramped areas, led to a lot of worry and feelings of unease. Seaspan went from a work force of over 1100 people down to about 350 in less than a month. Through many meetings and conversations, strong protocols were put in place so members could feel confident about their safety and were able to return to work. I am glad to say that most of our members are back on the tools.

Some areas of the Island have really picked up while others are still struggling. The work is out there, but we need to find ways to bring it back to our members.

I am happy to announce that to this date not one member of Local 276 has tested positive for the virus, and we are seeing our members going back to work. I believe this is far from over, and until a vaccine is found, we need to continue to be careful and vigilant; especially as we move into phase 3 of BC's restart plan. Please continue to work safe and look out for each other.

Fraternally yours,

Jason Pedersen  
Business Manager / Financial Secretary

## **Health Awareness**



These are challenging times, and we urge you to be mindful of your mental health as well as your physical health. As a member of the BC Building Trades, you have access to the Construction Industry Rehabilitation Plan, which offers a number of options to keep your mental health in check. CIRP offers long-term counselling to assist members dealing with depression, anxiety, substance use, pain management, and other mental health concerns. All services are free to members and their families.

Visit the CIRP website, email [info@constructionrehabplan.com](mailto:info@constructionrehabplan.com) or call 1-888-521-8611 for more information

If you have any question on any of the benefits, please call the office at 250-727-3458 or email [carrol@smwia276.ca](mailto:carrol@smwia276.ca)

### **Local 276 Ski Trip**

On February 29<sup>th</sup> we had our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Mt Washington ski trip, which once again was a huge success. Thanks to all who made it out for the day of fun in the snow and some great BBQ. Hope to see you and our brothers and sisters from UA 324 and IBEW 230 next year.



### **Golf Tournament**

Unfortunately, due to the limitation of group sizes, we are going to have to reschedule our golf tournament that was going to be held in August 2020 to August 2021.

### **Partners in Progress**

Every two years, SMACNA and SMART do a combined conference to help promote partnership between locals and contractors within the sheet metal industry. This is done by helping improve communication and the ability to work together. The local brought 4 members from the executive board and 4 contractors from VISMCA to this year's conference. For three days we worked together to find an effective cooperative effort to ensure an increasing market share and dominant role in the future of the Industry.

### **Joint Apprenticeship Committee Report**

Another group that was impacted by the pandemic was our apprentices as they work on moving through their schooling. In early March, Camosun College and RCABC closed their doors which created a lot of uncertainty for students, both for those who were still in class, and for those about to start the next year of their schooling.

Through conversations with the International Training Authority (ITA), Camosun College, and the Joint Apprenticeship Committee (JAC), it was agreed to proceed with the next fourth level class as an online learning environment, but to postpone the upcoming 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year classes. Things continue to change daily. If you have any questions about upcoming classes, please contact Rick Carter for the most up to date information.

Email: [rick@smwia276.ca](mailto:rick@smwia276.ca)

### **Pension Information**

It has also been a very tough time in the financial world over the last few months as everywhere else. We have heard members' concerns with how the recent hit to the stock market has affected their pensions. Through the due diligence and foresight of the pension committee, our pension was 133 percent funded, and although the plan did feel the hit from the stock market crash as most plans did, through careful investment diversification we are still fully funded and are already seeing the markets recover.

### **New Contractors to Local 276**

We are extremely glad to announce two new contractors to be associated with our local on the Island. Decimo Sheet Metal and Rhomberg Metals were both started by Local 276 members. We look forward to helping these companies grow and supplying our membership with more opportunities for work on the Island.

## Meetings and Training

As most of you are aware, we had put a hold on all meetings and apprentice training classes due to legislation and for the safety of our members. We are currently looking at how we can continue providing our educational classes in a safe manner. As soon as we are able to resume membership meetings, we will contact the membership.

## Future New Letters

Through discussions with many of our members and the local's executive board, the local will now be publishing our newsletters on our web site instead of mailing them. This was brought about by cost savings and by being better for the environment. If you still wish to receive the newsletter through regular mail, please phone the union hall and we would be happy to put you on a mailing list.

## Negotiations

Our Current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) due date is coming May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021. It may seem early, but it is a good time to start thinking about any changes you would like to see. Later this fall, we will be sending out a survey for you to let us know what you would like to see in our next agreement.

Let yourself be heard!

## Congratulations

Congratulations to the latest members to join the ranks as Red Seal Journeymen!

Jackson Boyle  
Cole Gracia  
Brendan McDonnell  
Austin Ronkainen  
Wyatt Cairns

Alexander Walker  
Ben Miller  
Adam Green  
Donovan Rush



## Helping Out in a Time of Need

With so many people feeling the financial struggle, it is hard for many to even put food on the table. We are finding people leaning on charities out in our communities more than ever. Local 276, in association with Vancouver Island Building Trades, is proud to lend a hand by making donations to five of the major food banks on the Island.

Campbell river - Campbell river food bank  
Courtney - Comox Valley Food Bank  
Nanaimo - Loaves and Fishes Food Bank  
Duncan - Cowichan Valley Basket Society  
Victoria - Mustard Seed Food Bank



## Training Center



We are just putting the finishing touches on our new training center. This is really a bright new area for our local. Through the utilization of Federal UTIP grants, we have been able to put together a facility that will greatly improve the ability to provide quality safety and technical training for our members.

## Union Office Contact Information

Jason Pedersen, Business Manager  
Rick Carter, Apprenticeship Training  
Cathy Nelson, Office Administration  
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