



BELL TECHNICAL SOLUTIONS

ONTARIO MEMBERSHIP REPORT

February 28, 2011

CEP Local Officers Review Proposed New Collective Agreement

On February 24th and 25th, the CEP bargaining committee met in caucus with CEP delegates from BTS local unions across Ontario to review a proposed replacement collective agreement.

The proposed collective agreement, which will have a term of May 6, 2011 to May 6, 2018, would replace the current collective agreement that is currently set to expire on May 6, 2014.

This unusual circumstance of mid-term negotiations was created by Bell Canada's decision to invest heavily in the new IPTV (FibeTV) market in Ontario and Quebec, and their stated preference to give this work to BTS rather than to other non-union contractors.

If FibeTV is as successful as expected, and the work goes to BTS, it would more than double the size of the CEP bargaining unit, from the current 2,000 members in Ontario to over 4,000, within a few years.

Because the installation of FibeTV is expected to require more weekend work than the current FMS work, BTS management met with the CEP bargaining committee to explore ways that our contract language could be amended to provide more weekend flexibility, but without any negative impacts on our membership.

We told BTS that we were prepared to work together with them to secure the FibeTV work, as long as there are no concessions on our current contract rights and benefits, and as long as we had written assurance that the FibeTV is guaranteed to go to our members, and not to non-union contractors.

After several weeks of talks, the bargaining committee was able to reach an agreement that not only has no take-aways, but includes many improvements in contract language, as well as monetary improvements. There are also hundreds of additional upgrades that will take place immediately upon ratification by the membership.

Following the review of all the proposed contract changes with the Local delegates, a secret ballot vote of the delegates was conducted on February 25th.

The delegates voted in favour of authorizing the bargaining committee to conduct a ratification vote by the membership across Ontario on the new contract. But, this would only take place after Bell Canada provides clear written guarantees that CEP members would be doing all of the FibeTV work in Ontario.

The ratification procedure, which will require the bargaining committee to travel to every local in Ontario to explain the details of the contract, and to conduct the secret ballot vote, would take place between March 21st and May 6th.

All members will have the right to vote on the proposed new contract, and only if a majority of members in Ontario vote in favour of the new contract will it be implemented.

If members do not vote to accept the new collective agreement, the current collective agreement will continue for the next three years, and BTS members will continue to do the FMS and other work for Bell. But the guarantee of the FibeTV will not apply, and Bell will be able to contract the work to other companies if they choose.

Further details of the proposed contract will be provided at a later date.

In Solidarity,

CEP Ontario Region

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