

Unifor to officially open negotiations with VIA Rail in Montreal

Unifor and VIA Rail will meet Friday October 30th, in Montreal to officially open negotiations for new contracts for members of Council 4000 and Local 100. Unifor has three collective agreements with the Crown Corporation that govern more than 2000 Unifor members who work in ticket sales, as Counter Sales Agents, baggage, Locomotive Attendants, office administration and labourers (Agreement No.1 - Unifor Council 4000), Chefs and on board train Service Attendants (Agreement 2 - Council 4000), and Electricians, Rail Car Technicians and Diesel Engine Mechanics (Agreement No.3 - Unifor Local 100). The current collective agreements expire at 23:59 local time on December 31, 2015.

Unifor National President Jerry Dias will join the bargaining committees of Council 4000 and Local 100 to kick off bargaining with VIA Rail. The members of the bargaining committees are as follows:

Council 4000

Barry Kennedy – President
Danny Andru - Secretary Treasurer
Jennifer Murray - Regional Rep, Atlantic Region
Mario Laroche - Regional Rep, St. Lawrence Region
Andrew Stephen - Regional Rep, Great Lakes Region
Dave Kissack - Regional Rep, Prairie Region
Ron Shore - Regional Rep, Mountain Region
Myriam Germain – Natl. Rep/Montreal Area Director
Bob Fitzgerald - National Representative
Bob Orr – Asst. to National Secretary Treasurer

Local 100

Ken Hiatt – President
Jacques Ouimet - Regional VP, Atlantic/St. Lawrence
Ashok Venkatarangam - Regional VP, Great Lakes
Terry McKimm - Regional VP, Prairie Region
Zoltan Czipfel - Regional VP, Mountain Region
Chris Garrod - Legislative Coordinator
Nicolas Bourgeois - Executive Council Member
Marcel Rondeau, National Representative
Brian Stevens – National Rep/Director Rail
Bob Orr – Asst. to National Secretary Treasurer

With the results of the recent federal election which saw the Liberals sweep into power with a majority government, there are many who are hoping that this will see a change to the funding model for VIA Rail, which the Harper Conservatives drastically reduced during their 9+ years in office. This 'hope' includes VIA themselves.

Until the federal government commits to increase its funding to VIA Rail, it will make for another difficult round of bargaining with the Crown Corporation. VIA said that it will submit a \$4 billion dedicated track plan for the busy Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal-Quebec City corridor to the new transport minister within months of the Liberal's announcement of their new cabinet, which is to be on November 4th. But VIA's desire for more funding is centered more on infrastructure, and not necessarily on improving workers' wages and benefits.

We will post bargaining updates when information becomes available on our National and Local websites and social media, as well as Unifor RailLINE.

In solidarity,

Barry Kennedy, President
Unifor National Council 4000

Ken Hiatt, President
Unifor Local 100