



SafeTalk



Coming Events

- Aug. 18-22 USW Intl. HS&E Conference, Pittsburgh PA.
- Aug. 27 Workers of Tomorrow Golf, Winnipeg Man.
- Sept. 7-9 SFL OH&S Conference, Regina Sask.
- Sept. 14-17 CSSE 2008 conference Quebec City, Que.
- Nov. 1 Vancouver Island Safety Conference, Qualicum BC

Approximately 4000 delegates attended the recent USW International Convention held in Las Vegas Nevada. Among the highlights of this years' convention were: the signing of the agreement creating Workers Uniting, the global union formed with the British union Unite, the appointment of District 3 assistant Director Carol Landry as the first woman international vice-president; inspiring speeches such as

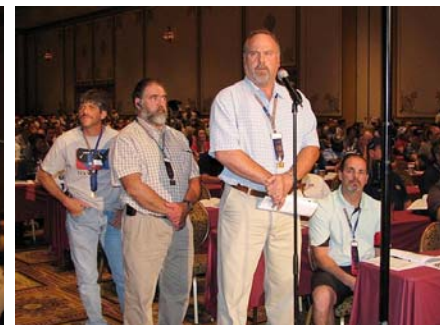
International President Leo Gerard's Keynote speech calling on local union leadership to challenge the global assault on workers and their families, Mexican mine workers union president Napoleon Gomez, NDP leader Jack Layton, congresswoman Nancy Pelosi, CLC president Ken Georgetti and presidential candidate Barack Obama. There was lively debate on a number of important resolutions.

The composite health and safety resolution said:

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that:

1. This convention pledges to reinvigorate our efforts to organize the unorganized so that the health and safety protections of our union may be brought to those who most desperately need them.
2. We call on all USW members to campaign vigorously and vote for political candidates who will support the cause of health and safety and who will assist that government agencies in the United States and Canada serve the best interest of workers.
3. We pledge unrelenting opposition to corporate and legislative efforts that weaken occupational health and safety laws, regulations and enforcement in the United States and Canada. We will work for the passage of progressive legislation to better protect worker rights and worker safety. We will also oppose so-called "tort reform," which seeks to take our members' right to win compensation for injuries caused by dangerous and defective products.
4. We will redouble our efforts to prevent workplace fatalities and catastrophic accidents.
5. In Canada we will demand a coroners' inquest into all workplace deaths of USW members.
6. We will continue and expand our efforts to educate our members and health and safety activists in both countries. We will work to ensure that every member knows his or her rights under a collective agreement or the law—especially the right to refuse unsafe work. We will focus much of this attention on young workers and workers new to the union. We will also find additional avenues to educate student and the public in general about health and safety issues as they prepare to enter the workforce.

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Clockwise from above; during the debate on the health and safety resolution Kelly Reynolds president of local 7552 spoke about BBS programs. District 3 HS&E coordinator Ron Corbeil spoke about recent tragic injuries and the continuing campaign to stop the deaths in the BC forest industry. Canadian Director Ken Neumann and District 3 Director Steve Hunt congratulate vice-president Carol Landry. Illegally removed Mexican miners president Napoleon Gomez who has been given asylum by the USW spoke via satellite from Vancouver.



Serious Injury at Local 7106

Brother Keith Payne, age 52, was injured while working in the Chisel North Mine at Snow Lake Manitoba on the night shift of July 2, 2008. It appears from the initial investigation that he was changing a bit on the left boom of a double boom jumbo at the face. A piece of loose ore thought to weigh between 20 to 30 pounds fell from high on the face and struck him. He has been transferred to the Health Sciences Center in Winnipeg where he continues to recover. We wish Keith a full and speedy recovery.

HAZARD ALERT

- A worker conducting hoe forwarding operations received serious crushing injuries to his lower extremity when the top of an 81 foot long fir log penetrated the machines guarding.
- A worker was seriously injured when he opened a 25KV high voltage electrical vault and contacted the high voltage conductor when he climbed inside in an attempt to recover his hard hat.
- A worker was fatally injured when falling trees to clear an area in front of a viewing platform. The worker attempted to fall an 85' tall 16" diameter alder tree, which was leaning approximately 20 degrees down hill. The tree "barber chaired" (split vertically to a height of 18') and the butt of the tree struck the worker.
- 27 workers in the Tolko Armstrong main office were exposed to and overcome by an accumulation of carbon monoxide. A malfunction of the heating unit (leak) is the suspected cause.
- An off highway log truck driver was attempting to remove the trailer reach pin. A hydraulic log loader was being used to assist in relieving the pressure on the pin. The front bunk stake was secured, pointing out over the rear of the truck. When the pin came free, the trailer reach struck the worker in the right cheek and the back of the workers head struck the bunk stake. The worker succumbed to the injuries.
- A worker sat down on a conveyor belt for a rest. The belt started, throwing the worker off balance and carrying the worker approximately 30 feet. The worker struck the back of his head on a cross beam before the worker was able to get free of the belt sustaining a serious injury.
- A faller was seriously injured when the top of a 12" Balsam tree that was previously hung up, struck him as he attempted to remove the hazard.

Health & Safety Resolution—Continued

7. We will continue our efforts to negotiate, improve and enforce health and safety clauses of our collective bargaining agreements, including the right to refuse unsafe work, immediate arbitration of health and safety disputes, union access to all relevant information and an increased role for the local union health and safety committee and representatives.
8. We will maintain our support for the efforts of our local union health and safety activists in their daily representation of our members and their efforts to efficiently document and control workplace hazards. We will expand our efforts to educate local union health and safety activists and committee members so that they are able to effectively perform their union duties and respond effectively to current health and safety issues, such as confronting "blame the worker" safety management and the impact of work organization and workplace restructuring on health and safety.
9. We will work to promote union goals, values and principles in all our occupational health and safety efforts. We will oppose "behavioral safety" programs that assume that worker misbehavior is the primary cause of workplace accidents. This includes our commitment to oppose "safety incentive" programs that assume workers are too stupid to care about their own safety and must be bribed with trinkets and bonuses. We will insist on programs that enlist the skill, knowledge and commitment of the workplace in finding and correcting hazards. We will continue to assert our strong belief that our members are not the problem—they are the solution.
10. We will actively promote increased research on occupational disease, and will work to establish government databases of worker exposure records, with strong privacy protections. We will work to expand the network of worker-friendly occupational health clinics in the United States and Canada.
11. We will fight to strengthen workers' compensation and negligence laws. All jurisdictions should increase workers' compensation benefits. Loopholes in law and policy favoring the employer must be closed so that all work related injuries and occupational diseases are fully compensated regardless of the latency of the injury or disease.
12. We will work to win worldwide recognition of April 28 as a day to remember our lost sisters and brothers, and to rededicate ourselves to fight for the living.
13. We will continue to work with other unions in our two countries and around the world, international labour federations, and other progressive organizations in the struggle for safer and healthier conditions for workers everywhere.

Extended work hours should factor into return to job after injury

Rehabilitation specialists guiding injured workers back to full-time employment should factor unconventional work schedules into their assessments and planning, suggests new research recently published in the *Journal of Occupational Rehabilitation*. Workers who are injured on the job have a harder time returning to employment if their schedules routinely require them to work extended hours, according to a recent Ohio State University study. Those who work more than 12 hours per day or 60 hours per week in particular are at the highest risk of losing their jobs when compared to injured workers returning to jobs with conventional eight-hour day shifts and 40-hour work weeks.

For those working extended hours per week, injured employees were 70 percent more likely to quit and 81 percent more likely to be fired than were their counterparts returning to jobs with conventional schedules. Because of this, the researchers say that occupational rehabilitation professionals should routinely consider employees' work schedules as part of their evaluations. The study used data from surveys conducted between 1988 and 2000, collecting a pool of 5,313 reported work-related injuries.