



SafeTalk



Health, Safety & Environment Conference A Huge Success



International president Leo Gerard addresses the 1300 participants at the 2008 United Steelworkers' Health, Safety and Environment Conference.



The conference was held August 18-22 at the David L. Lawrence Convention Center and Westin Convention Center Hotel in Pittsburgh.

Left, from top to bottom, Canadian national health, safety and environment department head Andy King points out some of the issues we face in Canada. New



international vice-president and former district 3 assistant to the director Carol Landry addressed the participants. Local 7552 president from Saskatchewan Kelly Reynolds unveiled a flag developed by his local and the district 3 HS&E committee addressing air quality.



This conference was a joint union-management conference that was a combination of several previous negotiated conferences

Coming Events

- Sept. 7-9 SFL OH&S Conference, Regina Sask.
- Sept. 8 NIDMAR online Disability Workshops
- Sept. 14-17 CSSE 2008 conference Quebec City, Que.
- Oct. 8 BC Fed Basic OH&S Fort St John BC
- Nov. 1 Vancouver Island Safety Conference, Qualicum BC

Fatality in Local 15303

On August 20, 2008 in District 6. Brother Justin Rogers, age 22 was killed while working underground at the Canada Talc Ltd. mine located in Madoc, Ontario. Justin was a member of Local 15303 and had been only working at the mine for approximately six weeks.

The investigation is still underway but preliminary reports indicate that Justin had begun his night shift when he was overcome by a "run of muck". This type of situation usually involves water or liquid mixed with the ore. We suspect the cause of death will be asphyxiation.

Our sincere condolences to Justin's parents as well as Justin's extended family and friends. Also our condolences also go out to the members of USW Local 15303.

Seven Faller Fatalities In BC This Year



Falling timber in British Columbia has historically been one of the most dangerous occupations in the world.

As a result of a number of initiatives such as the certifying of approximately 3000 fallers, implementing recommendations resulting from the inquest into the death of Ted Gramlich, safety improvements to the coastal collective agreement and recent regulation improvements it was looking like fatalities would be a thing of the past. In fact we went 28 months without a fatality. Unfortunately even with the reduction in work for fallers this year we have seen 7 fatalities; 2 to USW members.

District 3 health, safety and environment coordinator Ron Corbeil can't explain this dramatic turn around. "We don't have a lot of information on the accidents that happen in the non-union community, but in a few of the accidents we do know about falling on very steep terrain has definitely been a factor" said Corbeil

USW coast presidents and fallers are planning to meet with the BC forest safety council later this month to look for solutions.

HAZARD ALERT

- A certified faller was falling two green trees by pushing one tree into another to overcome a falling difficulty. As the two trees were falling down, a twelve metre high dead danger tree uphill fell on the faller fatally injuring him.
- A worker removed the guard from the Lathe machine and put their hand in to clean out debris. The machine was not locked out. The knives took off and the worker received serious injuries to upper extremities.
- A 1944 Grumman Goose airplane, carrying six workers, crashed while on route from Port Hardy to a remote logging operation on the west coast of Northern Vancouver Island. The pilot and four workers perished in the crash. Two workers survived.
- A worker was assisting a coworker to connect the track on a piece of mobile equipment. When the coworker struck the connecting pin with a sledge hammer, a small fragment of steel sheared off the pin and penetrated the worker's chest.
- A faller was on a lunch break sitting on a stump above a road being built when the faller was struck and fatally injured by a runaway log that came out of the forest above the faller.
- In a panel mining room, an extensible belt behind a mining machine was started and the hitch from the discharge sled came loose. The tail pulley and discharge skid pulled away from the miner 18 feet dragging an operator with it. Another operator that was standing beside was hit by the miner cable and he was flipped over backwards. The operator that was on the far side of the skid -wall side, was dragged by the skid 18 feet while holding onto an extensible pipe at the time. Both operators were scraped up and sore with no major injuries. Steel pin on hitch had worked itself loose (pin had no keepers bolts to hold pin in place).

Baie Verte Miners' Registry

We are collecting employment, exposure and health information from anyone who worked at the Baie Verte asbestos mine in Newfoundland anytime between 1955 - 1992. It is our mission to make this registry as complete and inclusive as possible. Your registration and general assistance are essential to the success of this registry.

To register go to: <http://www.bvminers.ca/registration.html>

Steelworkers Turn Up Pressure to Legislate Worker-Resident Staffing Ratios in Long-Term Care Facilities

United Steelworkers union representative Ray White says that it's a just campaign that is worth fighting for. The union's ongoing efforts to get the Province of Alberta to provide improved care levels in private long-term care facilities is heating up.

Brother White says that, increasingly over the past 15 years, long-term care facilities have been "warehousing" Albertans and that there needs to be legislated staff to resident ratios.

"It's a major issue that has to be resolved – not only for the current residents of long term care facilities, but for future generations of residents as well," he says. "And the public gets it."

A ratio of 5:1 to 7:1 would be helpful, says White, in the area of personal care attendants.

The Steelworkers have been conducting a campaign to get the government to act.

"If the legislation is there first, then the dollars will have to flow to service providers," says White. "I don't think it's going to happen on its own."

White will be leading a delegation of six rank and file USW health care activists to meet and discuss these and other issues with Tom Mill the Executive Director of Policy of Health and Wellness for the Province of Alberta.

"So far the specific issue of care give to resident ratios is not on the radar screen for the government. But they are feeling the heat from the media and the public and they know they have to do something about it," says White.

Local 480 & Local 9075 Health & Wellness Program

USW members from the Teck Cominco smelter in Trail BC is in the second consecutive year of a program designed to improve the overall fitness and health of workers and their family members and it has been a huge hit in this West Kootenay community.

The Program is an effort by the union, the company, and the community to assist workers and their families to achieve better overall fitness. The program recently held an open house "Health Checks" event on the smelter site with over 275 persons in attendance.

During the event individuals were exposed to a large array of get-healthy information displays and community-based services to assist them in making the lifestyle changes necessary to becoming healthier.

"The overall program was developed to help workers, family members and retirees, both from the hourly side and salaried side of the operations," says Local 480 health and safety coordinator Gord Menelaws. "It's all about helping and inspiring people to make lifestyle changes with the goal of leading a healthier, happier, and longer life."