



SafeTalk



OCTOBER 2007 - VOLUME 6, ISSUE 10

COASTAL FOREST INDUSTRY MAKES MAJOR GAINS IN HEALTH & SAFETY



Steelworkers District 3 Director Steve Hunt said, *“Our bargaining committee can be very proud that they achieved major improvements to the health and safety contract language that will help save lives.”*

The 13-week strike by more than 6,000 workers employed by FIR member companies and other smaller employers ended with a narrow acceptance vote of 51%. The strike, which started July 21, continues against Interfor, TimberWest and Island Timberlands.

Importantly the ratified agreement made improvements in safety, including contract language that assures the right to refuse unsafe or hazardous work. The contract also requires forest companies to ensure that transport is available for injured contractors and sub-contractors. District 3 Director Steve Hunt said, *“Negotiating the provision to supply transportation was to ensure we never have to see another tragic event such as the death of Ted Gramlich, where a worker bleeds to death waiting for transportation to medical aid.”*

The agreement also calls for a review of physically demanding and dangerous occupations. There is a recognition that workplace safety is influenced by circumstances such as; weather, travel distance, fatigue, terrain, lighting etc. This review is expected to develop guidelines, procedures and recommendations to limit the hours of work in such jobs.

Hunt also said, *“The narrow margin of acceptance means BC’s forestry workers remain concerned about the future. Employers should take the time to listen to their employees.”* And adds, *“the gains in health and safety are something the whole union can be proud of.”*

Coming Events

November 1, 2 USW Level 1 & 2, Winnipeg Manitoba
 November 20 BC Fed Incident Investigation, Parksville BC
 November 23 BC Fed Basic OH&S, Duncan BC
 December 6 BC Fed Incident Investigation, Invermere BC
 December 7 BC Fed Basic OH&S, Golden BC
 December 11 BC Fed Ergonomics, Victoria BC
 December 13 BC Fed Incident Investigation, Trail BC
 May 11-15 National HS&E Conference, Toronto Ontario

Local 1-3567 Member Fatally Injured



Eric Allan Leischner

Local 1-3567 member, Eric Allan Leischner, 43, was killed while logging on September 14, 2007 near Harrison Lake BC. Eric was laid off from Cattermole Timber at the time of his death and was working for a contractor. Eric was in radio communication with the operator of a Grapple Yarder, he had requested the operator to swing the grapple closer to a felled tree. The grapple yarder operator lost communication with the worker after swinging the grapple. Eric was found unconscious in close proximity of the grapple and he eventually succumbed to his injuries after being transported off the side hill down to the road by helicopter.

Eric is survived by his loving family, wife: Cheryl Edwards, children: Megen, Johnny and Darryl. Mother: Irene, Father: Donald, Father-in law: Gordon, Mother in-law: Edith. Brothers: Alvin (Tina) and Robert (Doris). Sister-in laws: Valerie and Pamela. Aunts, Uncles and numerous nieces and nephews.

Eric loved to fish and hunt, but most of all he loved being a foster father.

Our sincere condolences go out to Eric’s friends and family.

HAZARD ALERT

A logging truck driver was injured when his loaded logging truck was travelling down a short hill into a corner on a secondary road. The driver reported that the steering on the truck failed to respond to the turn, the truck then travelled across the road into the ditch and rolled.

Workers were moving a new debarker into position on rollers that ride on "I" beams. One of the rollers kicked-out from under the debarker. The debarker slid off the "I" beams and caught two workers between it and the adjacent machinery. One worker was seriously injured when he caught his finger between the debarker and the steel structure. The other worker received minor injuries.

A hook tender received injuries when he was struck by a log that was hit by the grapple of the active grapple yarder.

A Multi V Belt pulley (600 lbs +/-) popped off the drive shaft during a bearing retrofit and fell approximately 60 cm. pinning a Millwright seriously injuring him.

A loaded logging truck encountered a pickup travelling in the opposite direction around a bend on a forest road. The logging truck driver took evasive action, which caused his truck to go off the road and roll onto its side seriously injuring him.

Second Fatality in a Year at Interfor Adams Lake Sawmill

The second deadly accident in less than a year claimed the life of a 22-year-old Sorrento man at the Interfor Adams Lake sawmill near Kamloops BC.

Shortly after 5 a.m. October 15, Cody Davies was killed while working on the sawmill's canter line, where logs are turned into lumber.

The investigations are in the early stages. So far there are no witnesses to the event and nothing to indicate Davies died as a result of faulty machinery or unsafe work conditions.

Dale Malberg, 37, was killed in May while attempting to clear a log jam in a conveyor belt.

Two deaths in such a short period of time have cast a sombre mood over the operation and its more than 200 employees. Most staff were sent home and were not expected to return to work until concerns about employee safety are put to rest.

Rail Workers Tell House Panel of Injuries Followed by Harassment, Intimidation, Firings

Former railroad workers told a House committee Oct. 24 that they have been harassed and intimidated by management and supervisors, and in some cases fired, after being injured on the job.

The workers testified before the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure at a hearing on "The Impact of Railroad Injury, Accident and Discipline Policies on the Safety of America's Railroads."

The hearing was called to examine reported allegations from rail workers "suggesting that railroad safety management programs sometimes either subtly or overtly intimidate employees from reporting on-the-job injuries," according to committee documents.

Gregory Haskin, a former Union Pacific conductor, described how he was struck in the head by a piece of steel on a rail car in a Kansas City switching yard on Nov. 10, 1972. Afterward, he was left in a maintenance truck with his head bleeding for two hours while "management tried to determine what to do with me," Haskin said.

No one called 911 or took Haskin to an emergency room. Instead, he was driven past four major hospitals to a business and industry clinic in Missouri, where he was seen by a retired ophthalmologist. Haskin said he was not prescribed medication or given a tetanus shot because that would make his injury recordable. He told the committee he did not demand to be taken to a doctor because he was afraid of losing his job.

Haskin was later diagnosed with post-concussive syndrome. From 2001 until 2004, he underwent 17 surgeries on his head and neck. Haskin told the committee he still battles headaches every day.

Timothy Knisely, a former Norfolk Southern Corp. conductor, described how he was struck and seriously injured by an air hose.

"After 27 years of dedicated and loyal service to the railroad, I was subsequently charged with lying about being struck in the head and eventually fired," Knisely said. "This charge happened solely because I dared to report my injury."

James M. Brunkenhoefer, national legislative director for the United Transportation Union (UTU), said railroad workers know that "if you have a recordable accident, you expect to be fired."