



# The Comp-Ten REPORT

NOVEMBER 2012

Story ideas and comments for the Comp-Ten Report can be submitted to: [comp10report@bcgeu.ca](mailto:comp10report@bcgeu.ca)

## Tough bargaining leads to highway extensions

By Mike Nuyens,  
Chairperson of Operational Services, Component 10



NUYENS

Well it's been almost three years since the union became aware of any indication of highways maintenance contract extensions. We met with our membership, the industry, the ministry and government throughout those years. Finally in early December of last year the union was advised by the ministry that extensions were being considered.

Throughout January and February we met with the membership, we held a highways bargaining council meeting and we set in place a provincial bargaining team to meet with the employer to negotiate a first provincial memorandum of agreement.

The process was extremely difficult on both parties, however we reached an agreement in the final hours that allowed us to go back to local tables to negotiate local issues. Local bargaining began almost the next day in some areas of the province. Through some tough bargaining we negotiated and ratified new collective agreements in 25 service areas represented by the BCGEU.

As I stated above, the process was difficult, it was tiring,

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Operational Services Component Chair Mike Nuyens speaks with reporters in Kamloops as the provincial government announces that highways maintenance agreements will run an additional five years, through to 2018-19.

## Challenging negotiations lead to job security and other gains

By Jim Manson

After 23 years of trying to get the Road Builders Association to a single bargaining table we finally succeeded. This allowed us to negotiate province wide gains and move to local tables to negotiate local issues.

The deadline imposed by the government and other restrictions presented a real challenge. But, we came to an agreement on terms and wages which have provided real job security for our members and their families.

Auxiliary members will enjoy significant improvement to their benefits through the new Health Spending account, these members will be able to purchase approximately 40% more benefits than before as every dollar earned may be used

without revenue Canada Deduction (as long as the benefits qualify). We hope to make further improvements in the future.

We also negotiated another first – a seat on transCDA Road Building Committee. A seat on the committee will allow us to advocate for our members.

The parties agreed to jointly update the operator training guide. A committee of the BCGEU and Roadbuilders will be struck to do this work. All contractors will now use the updated Operator Training Guide as a measure of competency for new hires starting next year.

These are a few of the changes to the collective agreements negotiated around the province, after a challenging round of bargaining.



## Province to scrap AirCare light vehicle testing in 2014

Dave Cumming, Local 1003 chair, and 20 year worker at AirCare speaks to reporters following the announcement the provincial government plans to scrap emissions testing for light vehicles at the end of 2014.

“AirCare is more cost-effective in removing pollutants from the atmosphere than any other transportation-based measure, so it makes no sense to scrap light vehicle testing in 2014,” says Darryl Walker, BCGEU president.

The BCGEU will work with the employer during this transition phase and protect the interests of the 114 members who work at AirCare.

## What is Silicosis?

Silicosis is a lung disease caused by the inhalation of crystalline silica dust.

Workers all over the world are exposed to silica and each year there are thousands of deaths resulting from silicosis.

Silicosis is probably the oldest occupational disease known to man that still poses serious health risks. There are records dating from ancient Greece and Egypt showing silicosis symptoms among quarry and stone workers.

Silica dust is on many gravel roads because of crushed rock usage in both winter sand and in new gravel. It is less dangerous with the use of dust stabilization and water especially during grading operations.

Any material that contains crystalline silica may be hazardous if they produce any form of air-borne dust. Exposure and inhalation of silica dust and any dust that contains crystalline silica, has been linked to other diseases, such as lung cancer and tuberculosis.

There is no cure, but silicosis is completely preventable when and if employers, workers and health professionals work together to reduce silica exposures.

For more information on silicosis visit [www.worksafecbc.com](http://www.worksafecbc.com)

### *Tough bargaining - continued from page 1*

and it was quick based on the time frames put on the parties by the Ministry of Transportation and the government.

The membership can look forward to another five years of employment on top of the time left in the current maintenance contracts. This provides over seven years of job security to our members.

The entire process saw NO concessions that affected the workers. We managed to negotiate provin-

cial language on training, benefits and wages, and most of our local tables were able to achieve improvements as well.

What's next in Component Ten?

Our members in PRT are just entering bargaining. Members in the Envirotec facilities are facing job security issues with the recent announcement that AirCare will be phased out for passenger vehicles at the end of 2014.

Our members that work as Commissionaires have taken a strike

vote, membership at Point Hope shipyards is increasing due to additional contacts, our Center Line pavement members are travelling the province marking the roads, and our members that work for the Canada Line continue to raise health and safety concerns.

The Component Executive continues to work on the issues facing our members and we will be out conducting worksite visits in the coming months.

In solidarity, Mike Nuyens



## “We’re not Gods out here, we can’t just make (the snow) disappear”

By Amy Reid, Surrey Now

Pat Miller’s a truck operator with Mainroad Group, a local company that takes care of clearing snow on many of the Lower Mainland’s highways.

He’s been clearing snow for some 30 years.

As we set off, Miller said there wasn’t really a lot of work to be done, as the night team had taken care of the snowfall overnight.

“The roads are not too bad right now,” Miller said. “And there’s not a lot of ice.”

“Traffic’s going to start picking up now.” Miller said aggressive drivers add to an already hectic shift.

“We’re not gods out here, we can’t just make it (the snow) disappear,” he said, adding that people often speed past the trucks, putting themselves in danger when road conditions are poor.

“The safest place on the road is behind a plow truck.”

A few minutes later, Miller said it was time to start salting. He explained you can’t go faster than 70 kilometres an hour when salting.

And they sure use a lot of salt; his truck had about \$1,100 worth of salt on it that day.

“You’ve got to look at the skies all the time. You can tell what the weather is going to do by looking at the sky,” he said, predicting the area might see the odd flurry that afternoon.

“When you’re plowing at 50 kilometres an hour, you can throw snow 30 to 40 feet with that one,” he said. “That’s one of the fun parts of the job.”

It’s the equipment that he truly loves.

“I was born with hydraulic fluid running through my veins.”

As we ended our ride and headed back to the Mainroad yard in Cloverdale, I asked Miller what tips he had for drivers this time of year.

“The biggest thing is to have patience. Let us do our job and clear the roads, so you can be safe.”

I asked Miller if he thought we’d see snow this weekend. He said probably not, as weather forecasts predict rain. “I sure hope it doesn’t snow, because that means work for me, and I have to watch football this weekend,” he said with a chuckle.

• Full story originally published Jan. 19, 2012. This shortened version is reprinted with permission of Surrey Now.

## The time to get political is NOW

By Kevin Staneland,  
Chair, Local 1008

Not since the beginning of the labour movement have we seen the kind of attacks against the gains made by workers that we are witnessing today.

We see declining wages, benefits and pensions at the same time public services are being cut. Meanwhile corporate taxes are reduced by billions.

We are told that this will bring jobs and lower prices, however nothing could be further from the truth.

The fact is, the only thing that seems to be on the rise is corporate profits, and we can now see how certain political favors are rewarded with back door deals and the privatization of public services.

We see huge salaries, benefits, bonuses and pensions to those at the top, while everyone else is expected to accept zeroes.

It is time we all start to let them know that we are demanding an immediate stop to the attacks on workers’ rights and fair collective bargaining.

We need to demand that our tax dollars are put into the infrastructure and public services.

This is an uphill battle and we can’t count on the media to do it.

The way we can get the word out is to use our social networking and the internet to provide the public with the truth.

Let’s send these right wing governments packing.

We need to put people first, not corporations and the rich.

# Prison time for running down traffic control worker

In March, Michael Paul Biemans was sentenced to seven days in jail for running down a flag person. He further received one year probation along with a mandatory anger management course.

The judge explained the dangers traffic control people face in performing their daily duties and explained the justice system will not tolerate such actions.

The BC Flagger Association will be there to support our co-workers again in the future!

• Printed with permission from [www.bcflaggingassociation.com](http://www.bcflaggingassociation.com)



(Front to back, left to right) Mike Prystae (see below), Mike Nuyens (Chair), Jim Manson, Kelly McDonald, John Cantlon, Earl Haward, Dave Cummings, Keith Jansons, Tyler Dhensaw, Fred Street, Grahame Somerville, Scott Bumphrey, Rory Smith, Dan Cross and Kevin Staneland.

## OBITUARY

### Archie Cornock

Long time highways worker Archie Cornock passed away on October 5th at the age of 70. He was a long time resident of Pouce Coupe, BC.

Archie was always willing to help those in need, especially younger people. Brother Archie was a steward with highways in government days and continued on after privatization.

At retirement he was a grader operator out of the Pouce Coupe yard so it was only fitting a grader lead the procession from the hall in Pouce to the grave site.

There were apparently only two things that upset our Brother at work; bad mouthing the union and its members.

He is the father of long time activist Sister Sandy Fellers, a machine operator in the same yard as her father.

## MOVING ON

### All the best to Mike Prystae

Long time highways member and BCGEU activist Mike Prystae is leaving the union. Mike began as a highways worker back in 1984. He has been a steward for the last 27 years. Along the way he's also served as local chair, recording secretary and health and safety rep. We wish him all the best in his new role as Bridge Superintendent with the Grand Forks Division of Emcon Services.



Make sure you're able to receive regular email bargaining updates. To update or add your email address visit [www.bcgeu.ca/email](http://www.bcgeu.ca/email)

And remember to check [www.bcgeu.ca](http://www.bcgeu.ca) often for Component 10 news!

# WORDSEARCH

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ATRIN

BELLY DUMPS

BTRAIN

CABOVER

CHAINS

COMPU SPREAD

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DUMP BOX

EATON FULLER

FLY SPREAD

FREIGHT LINER

FRINK

FUEL

GREASE

INTERNATIONAL

KENWORTH

OUTHOUSE

OVERWEIGHT

PETERBILT

PUPS

PUSH ROD

REXROTH

SINGLE

SLEEPER

TANDEM

TENCO

TIRES

TRANSMISSION

TRIAxLE

UNDERBODY

WEIGH SCALE

WESTERN STAR

WING PLOW



# Retirement Matters

By Rory Smith

Component 10 Pension Committee

Some existing members of the BCGEU pension plan have indicated they did not receive a pension statement and they have not been receiving the pension plan news bulletin.

If you did not receive a pension statement this Spring and you have not been receiving the bulletins please contact Barbara Whitear at Aon Hewitt (1-888-993-8992) and the BCGEU to update your contact information. We want to ensure members receive their pension information.

As a result of bargaining, there are new service areas that have been negotiated into the plan. Brian Schramm has sent out a news bulletin to each area. If you did not receive the bulletin please contact your local area office for a copy.

We are considering worksite visits or evening meetings to review pension issues with members. This

is important for members and is a large undertaking given the size of the area and some of the remote locations. When this process is started we want to have all the current information necessary including any possible plan changes for the future. The plan changes that are being researched at this time are waiting for regulatory approval on two key issues, as well as awaiting details of recent proposed changes to the Pension Benefits Standards Act. Brian Schramm is continuing to monitor the progress of these issues. Once we receive regulatory approval, site visits will be arranged in order to update members with the most current information.

Following a year in the markets with the uncertainty and instability especially in Europe, the unit values on a year to date basis as of April 30, 2012 are up 3.26%. This instability and volatility is continuing and the European market is still troubled by Greece and others. The

immunization fund has returned .36% year to date.

For those of you close to retirement, you should be aware of ongoing changes in the Canada Pension Plan. For more information on these changes, or to estimate your CPP pension visit [servicecanada.gc.ca](http://servicecanada.gc.ca)



**Tom Kowski** Retired member Tom Kowski (left) from Service Area 14 with Fred Street Chair of Local 1005.



**Peter Voykin** Peter Voykin has retired from the Grand Forks road crew. Peter has been a member since 1978. That makes him a 34 year member. Pete retired on April 20th. Funny how that worked out as his call number was Grand Forks 20. With Peter is Dave Johnson (left) and right Rob Woykin.



**Ted Olson** Ted Olson retired in April after 28 years of service with highways. He was involved with the union as a steward, bargaining committee, local chair and chief shop steward. He was also an excellent foreman and a great person to work with. He will be greatly missed by his crew and the union.