

August 5, 2022

## Empowering CUPW Members to Fight Forward

Comrades & friends,

For those I haven't yet had the pleasure of meeting, my name is Roland Schmidt and I was elected as your new 3<sup>rd</sup> National Vice-President (Organizing) this past May. Before my election, I was serving my 2<sup>nd</sup> term as the Local President of CUPW 730 (Edmonton and affiliates) in Alberta. Since relocating to Ottawa in June, I've dedicated my efforts to stabilizing our organizing department and constructing a comprehensive strategic plan that, with broad member support, will revitalize our union and position us to effectively fight to make our jobs better.

I'm very excited to report that on August 4, the National Executive Board held an emergency meeting and unanimously approved a new proposal for an internal organizing campaign. It is called *Building Worker Power* and will recruit organizers out of each Region to travel to, and collaborate with, Regional and Local leadership to conduct workfloor meetings and mass recruitment to train thousands of our members in workfloor organizing.

Laying this foundation will give Locals the skills and support to build out their own mass activist recruitment and training infrastructure. More activists mean developing greater organizing capacity in each Local, which will get more Regions and Locals collaborating to give us the leverage needed to not only collectively assert our rights on our own work-floors but eventually

make free collective bargaining the path of least resistance for the corporation and government.

CUPW is only as strong as our workfloors are organized, unified around a plan, and willing to mobilize. Your National and Regional leadership will never have the power to defeat the boss and government on their own. Without mass buy-in from our members to strengthen CUPW from the workfloor up, our jobs as postal workers will keep deteriorating. Many of us have felt frustrated by the state of our jobs long before the pandemic compounded our problems. There's no erasing what's happened, but we have every opportunity to change which direction we want to take moving forward.

Come September/October, trained organizers will be visiting our workfloors and appealing for us to help and get involved in any way we can. The corporation is already positioning to use Amazon and the pandemic as excuses to cut us down in bargaining in 2023. We must be ready, but our capacity to fight forward will only be proportional to how many of us are committed to building the solidarity of our union, in whatever way we can, be it small or big – more hands make lighter work.

As this campaign grows, I look forward to sharing inspiring examples from Locals across the country of what we, as workers, can accomplish collectively once given the tools and support to empower ourselves.

When workers fight, we win, but to fight effectively, we must first recruit, train and build our confidence through smaller Local victories. We must master the basics of taking back our workfloors at the Local level before taking on huge battles like facing down a corporation committed to replacing our jobs through automation or a government eager to trample our bargaining rights. The longest journey can only start with the first step. No struggle, no victory.

In solidarity,



Roland Schmidt  
3<sup>rd</sup> National Vice-President

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