

SOCIETY NEWSCAST – March 2007 Edition (2006:07)

A NEW DAY FOR NEW HORIZON SYSTEM SOLUTIONS (NHSS)

In May 2006, the NHSS Local Committee participated in a four-day teambuilding and strategic planning Conference that identified the need for significant changes to the way the Local was operating in order to improve member cohesion and confidence. Less than a year later, led by LVP Joe Sarick and his leadership team of Kathy Wilcox, Derek Francis, Jay Monteiro and Simon Huang, the Local has bounced back with an impressive display of member solidarity in the results of its recent Collective Agreement ratification of a two-party settlement. A majority of Local members attended pre-vote membership meetings, 85% actually voted and the ratification passed by 85%.

While issues facing the Local are significant – off shoring and spin-offs are a fact of life in NHSS – and the relationship with management can be tense, the Local successfully negotiated provisions in the new Collective Agreement that greatly enhance member rights in a spin-off.

Staff Officer Blaine Donais reports that he sees a new-found excitement inside the Local and credits its revitalization to engaging the membership through meetings, written communications and an opportunity for meaningful feedback. He also credits the tireless and diligent support of Rod Sheppard, EVP-Member Services, for helping to turn the Local around.

LVP Joe Sarick is equally enthusiastic: “I believe that, more than ever, members recognize and appreciate being members of The Society union and the strong position we have in meeting future challenges with the support of our Central Society.”

In NHSS, the member really does come first.

VERTEX BARGAINING REPORT

By Tracy Miller, Vertex Local Vice President

The Vertex Local recently completed its Collective Agreement renewal negotiations. Two weeks of two-party bargaining ended with a decision to proceed to mediation/arbitration. After two days of mediation failed to produce agreement between the parties, Arbitrator William Kaplan, awarded a 1-year renewal of the Collective Agreement with a 3% economic increase.

Bargaining surveys were conducted during the fall of 2006 and the priorities of the membership were the foundation of our Agenda that was presented to

Management. Our Agenda was based on the themes of Fairness, Facilitating Career Progressions & Rewards and Security.

Vertex is an Outsourcing organization that provides BPO services to organizations like Hydro One. As with our brothers and sisters in Inergi and NHSS, the threat of off shoring and being competitive to win new business at market rates is something that we are constantly reminded of in discussions with management.

The Vertex Management Agenda focused on continued Culture Change where it was apparent that reducing costs was their major driver. The Management Agenda included items such as a new two-tier employee category, flexibility around off shoring and exclusion of some of our Society positions.

Another factor that impacted on our ability to negotiate a two party settlement was the fact that Vertex was sold during our two party discussions. Vertex was a subsidiary of United Utilities and the sale to a consortium of US investors led by Oak Hill was announced during our discussions.

Membership meetings were held during the week of March 19th to advise our members of what transpired during the recent round of negotiations. During these meetings, members were advised that we would be seeking their input again shortly as the Bargaining Team would only be taking a short break before preparing for next year's negotiations.

The Vertex Local Bargaining Team members are Tracy Miller (Vertex LVP), Barbara Jackson (Delegate), Keith Rattai (Hydro One LVP) and Jim Bell (Staff Officer).

I would like to thank the members of the Local for their continued support and participation. I would also like to thank the members of the bargaining team for the tremendous amount of time and effort that was put in during this recent round of negotiations. A special thanks to the Hydro One Local for allowing us to borrow their LVP. Last but not least, I would especially like to thank Staff Officer Jim Bell for all of the extra time and effort that he devoted to our bargaining. The members of Vertex appreciate your time, dedication, commitment and support.

OPG LOCALS MERGE

As of April 1, the two OPG Locals will merge into one under the leadership of a single Local Vice President, Lanny Totton, who emerged victorious from a field of four candidates when the ballots were counted February 15th. Mr. Totton was the lone OPGI candidate. Adam Habayeb, Michael Lohse and Dennis Minello ran from Nuclear. A total of 1,468 ballots were cast with voter turnout percentages at 58.5% for OPGI and 41% for OPGN.

Following the election, Lanny Totton wrote both Locals to pledge his commitment “to working in an open, transparent and co-operative manner with each of you. I want to foster and nurture a cohesive and respectful environment on our Local Committee. I want to be as inclusive as possible in my approach.” He thanked outgoing OPGN LVP Olaf Heilandt for agreeing to see negotiations for Band “N” staff in Nuclear through to a successful conclusion. Mr. Totton’s intention is to work together with his Unit Directors to increase the voice of the membership in Local affairs.

AT THE OEB

The Society is participating once again as an intervenor at the Ontario Energy Board which is reviewing rate and fee increases for Hydro One and the IESO. Our intervenor status serves two purposes. First, we are able to set the record straight when groups who oppose the increases try to blame Society members’ salaries and pensions for the rising rates. Second, we have the right to submit interrogatories to both the IESO and Hydro One which they must answer. To date, we have submitted and received answers to a variety of questions.

The Society’s strategy thus far has been to support the increases while raising serious concerns about:

- critical staff and skill shortages at Hydro One, where not a single new employee has been hired into a permanent Society position since June 2005, even to replace employees who leave the company
- serious delays, inefficiencies and cost overruns in Hydro One work programs resulting from the human resource shortage
- the overuse of contractors instead of utilizing and developing in-house resources

The Society continues to participate in pre-hearing Conferences which are used to identify issues, determine the appropriateness of interrogatories and receive updated information from Hydro One. Formal hearings are scheduled to begin April 26.

Society people involved in the OEB hearing process are Al McMurtrie and Scott Travers from the IESO, John Cameron and Lynn Andrews from Hydro One and Society Staffers Richard Long and Sonia Pylyshyn.

OPA

The recently created Ontario Power Authority (OPA) is charged with developing an integrated plan for the entire electricity system in Ontario and The Society has something to say about that. In our comments, we have generally supported the overall plan but have made suggestions about timing, gaps in the process, human resources, fuel use, pollution abatement, sustainability and reliability. Our participation with OPA is part of our general strategy of building influence and

credibility in order to shape the electricity industry in a way that best meets our members' needs. President Andrew Muller and Staffer Richard Long are leading The Society's efforts.

SPECIAL MEETING OF SOCIETY COUNCIL IN APRIL '07

Following last year's Audit of Society finances and operations, the October 2006 Council approved an Audit Action Plan (AAP) for improving internal processes and directed that the Council reconvene in April 2007 to review the results.

Three Committees – Accounting, Local Review and Governance/Compliance – have been working hard to complete their reports and recommendations under the guidance of D'Arcy Martin, a highly experienced and respected facilitator from the labour movement. Members of the Committees were nominated by Locals who were urged to make diversity a key factor in their selection process. As a result, AAP participation reflects a broad range of experience, skills and backgrounds. Each Committee will produce a report for review by the Executive Board, which is responsible for giving a final report and set of recommendations to the April 21st Council being held in Toronto at the Yonge & Bloor Marriott Hotel. Reports and recommendations will be sent to Council representatives well in advance of the Council meeting.

The AAP was a monumental undertaking, both in scope and in importance to The Society, and we wish to recognize the following individuals whose energy, intellect and dedication made it all possible:

Accounting Committee

- Facilitator: D'Arcy Martin
- Elected: **Dave Brown** (Unit Director, IESO); **John Cameron** (Unit Director, Hydro One); **Elaina De Luca** (LVP, Inergi); **Joe Fierro** (Unit Director, OPG-I); **Bill Jones** (EVP-Finance); **Marlene Khalil** (OPG-N); **Stacey Lafontaine** (Hydro One); **Rob Stanley** (LVP, Bruce Power); **Lanny Totton** (LVP, OPGI); **David Young** (LVP, Kinectrics)
- Staff: Annelise Bork (Staff Union); Cheri Funston; David Russell; Lisa Van Camp

Local Review Committee

- Facilitator: D'Arcy Martin
- Elected: **John Cameron** (Unit Director, Hydro One); **Brad Ellison** (Delegate, OPGN); **Michael Lohse** (Unit Director, OPG-N); **Rod Sheppard** (EVP-Member Services); **Lanny Totton** (LVP, OPGI); **Kathy Wilcox** (Unit Director, NHSS)
- Terry Fitzpatrick (Staff Union); Lisa Van Camp with assistance from Elena Medina and Laura Langmaid.

Compliance/Governance Committee

- Facilitator: D'Arcy Martin
- Elected: **Leslie Forge** (EVP-Policy); **Elaina De Luca** (LVP, Inergi); **Waldemar Janowski** (Bruce Power); **Dennis Minello** (Unit Director, OPG-N); **Scott Travers** (Unit Director, IESO)
- Staff: Lynda Crichton (Staff Union); Cheri Funston; Dan Kellar (Staff Manager); Lisa Van Camp with assistance from Elena Medina and Laura Langmaid.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY FRAMEWORK FOR 2007-2008

As part of its financial planning and budgeting for 2007/08, the Board has identified a number of key priorities.

First, we want to strengthen Society foundations through an active program of member outreach that will include:

- improving service to members and two-way communications with members
- negotiating strong collective agreements, particularly when dealing with adversarial employers
- more engaged members and significantly better succession planning through training and other strategies
- improving links between Society Locals and overall Society operations

Second, the Board has identified a need to rebuild solidarity among the leadership which has suffered to some degree by the move from a single employer in the Ontario Hydro days to multiple employers today. This will involve developing a basic code of conduct as well as a shared understanding of Society roles, responsibilities and accountabilities.

Finally, The Society needs to make a genuine commitment to organizing new members and influencing our members' work environments. This will require expanding the activities of our Political Action Committee in order to create public visibility and political influence. In addition to developing a long-term relationship with all three political parties, The Society will seek meaningful participation in government standing committees and other government processes to advocate positions in our members' interest. These include, but are not limited to:

- promoting nuclear "new build" and refurbishment
- promoting CANDU technology
- opposing contracting out, "right-shoring" and off-shoring
- ensuring smooth transitions for the use of coal and alternative energy sources in a judicious generation mix

With these priorities in mind, LVPs and Principal Officers are now preparing draft work plans for The Society's major overall programs for 2007/08.

GOODBYE ANNELISE...

A retirement dinner was held on February 23 to celebrate Senior Financial Officer Annelise Bork's 29 years of service to The Society. Colleagues, past and present, gathered to share stories and memories of a remarkable woman and dedicated staffer. Rod Sheppard, elegant in a white tuxedo, hosted the event. Guests included Society Past Presidents Michael Brickell, Mario Germani, Chris Cragg and Colin Throop. Also in attendance were former Society Executive and Board members John Compostella, Roger Friedmann, Dave Jefford, Jan Prokop and Edik Zwarenstein. Former staffers included Lesley Logan (Stubbs) and Lesley Stevenson and her husband Michael who now live in California. Former Staff Manager Darlene Booth, who retired in 1999, sent a message of congratulations from her home in British Columbia. Many thanks to Cheri Funston for arranging a wonderful evening.

HELLO JOAN

Annelise Bork's successor in the role of Senior Financial Officer is Joan Florence, a Certified General Accountant and MBA with more than 15 years of experience in the not-for-profit sector. Joan was the first (and unanimous) choice of the hiring committee. Joan was attracted to The Society by the new and different challenge it offers while allowing her to stay in a sector which values rights and fairness for individuals. A high-energy person (she works out five to six days a week), Joan loves being busy, getting involved and learning new things. Joan is indeed an excellent addition to The Society's staff.

HYDRO ONE TO THE RESCUE

When a winter storm downed Hydro lines in Bruce County, Hydro One rushed to the scene. Bruce LVP Rob Stanley praised the efforts of Hydro One workers: “In the big winter storm of February 2007, Hydro One employees were called into action to restore power to the local communities. Faced with an overwhelming task, Hydro One staff worked tirelessly in adverse conditions. I extend my gratitude and appreciation to those Hydro One workers.”

