

News from the Society of Energy Professionals

Three-way contest for Society president



Candidates for Society President (l to r): Adam Habayeb, Rod Sheppard, Frank Lenarduzzi

An election for Society president is currently underway, with three candidates vying for the position.

Rod Sheppard, who is currently serving as President (pro-tem), is being challenged by **Adam Habayeb**, an auditor/assessor in OPG's nuclear waste division and former Society unit director, and **Frank Lenarduzzi**, a protection and control engineer and senior program engineer (metering) in Hydro One and former Society delegate.

All three candidates stress membership involvement as a cornerstone of their campaigns.

Sheppard has served as President (pro-tem) since October 29th, 2007.

Though he had no plans at that time to run for the permanent position, he decided in December that he would do so. He says the Society is moving forward, and he sees "significant signs" of the Society "moving forward, teams working together, elected officials and staff working hard to ensure that we regain [the members'] confidence." On the strength of his experience and reputation for team-building, he pledges to continue to work to the mission that was set in place five years ago, with, as priorities:

- ◆ Continue defending the Society against offshoring
- ◆ Continue driving the Society's political action campaigns
- ◆ Ensuring every voice in the Society is heard and respected
- ◆ Forge alliances in the Ontario Federation of Labour to ensure success

A first-line manager in Ontario Hydro and Bruce Power, Sheppard has served on the Society Executive Board since 1998, as unit director, Bargaining Group Vice President, Executive VP Membership Services, and President (pro-tem). He has been on several Society negotiating teams for various locals, has served on the Society's strategic planning committee, was a member of the Hydro One strike committee, is a member of the Training Committee, and was a member of the Grievance Coordinating Committee until 2004. Most recently he was elected the Ontario Federation of Labour's Vice President for smaller affiliates.

Mr. Habayeb says the Society needs to get "back on track." The workplace investigation

██████ he says, are causing the Society's reputation to suffer. He would:

- ◆ develop/implement a strategy based on input from each local
- ◆ organize face to face meetings and provide immediate feedback
- ◆ change [Society] structure so that all UDs and Delegates have access to the same information at the same time
- ◆ advocate for a limit of two terms (six years) for the President and all Vice Presidents
- ◆ lower dues while maintaining strong financials

Habayeb says he's "no stranger" to the Society organization. With a PhD from McMaster University, an MBA from SUNY Buffalo, and advanced studies in strategic change, in 1998 he was a unit director in Ontario Hydro's research division (now Kinectrics), and in 2000-2002 and 2004-2007 a unit director in OPG's Pickering NGS. He's served on several Society committees and task forces, including as Chair of the Audit Committee in 2002.

Mr. Lenarduzzi says it's time to "stop, look, and listen – members 1st." The Society, he says, needs to be more responsive to members' needs, reflecting on areas where the Society has been successful and "pinpointing areas where we can be more effective." He promises to provide leadership and improve decision-making processes, by:

- ◆ Publishing a membership directory so that members can freely communicate with each other
- ◆ Setting up a "member response system" that will guarantee a response to any question within a reasonable period
- ◆ Establishing a Round Table of Members from different locals, to "facilitate the candid & unfettered exchange of member ideas"
- ◆ Building coalitions, by reaching out to organizations that are "like-minded partners"
- ◆ raising awareness among neighbours and governments about sustainable development, and promoting viable electricity solutions

- ◆ finalizing the Society's nuclear policy (currently in development)

An engineer with a MBA from Athabaska University and several advanced certificates in project management, both from the University of Toronto and private-sector institutions, Lenarduzzi has worked at Ontario Hydro and Hydro One for over 25 years. He is a member of the Society's Finance Committee, a policy sub-committee, and the Political Action Committee. A strike captain during the 2005 Hydro One strike, Lenarduzzi authored two sections 2007 the Society's 2007 "Getting it Right" plan. He has an intense interest in sustainable energy use, and owns two patents for heat pumps.

He maintains a weblog: <http://lenarduzzi.blogspot.com/>

The current election for President was set in motion ██████████. The winner of the election will serve in office until March 31st, 2010.

Ballots were sent to members on Thursday, March 13th. They are required to be returned to the Society office by, or post-marked before, noon, April 7th, 2008.

Pensioners first to launch local site

Society locals are beginning to launch their own Local web-sites on the Society's web-site.

On Monday, March 17th, the Pensioners' Chapter launched their local web-site, which can now be viewed by clicking on "Locals" on the Society's home page.

The Pensioners' Chapter was one of the three locals that volunteered to take the lead on setting up Local sites, trying out the new system, and helping Biz-Zone, the Society's web providers, iron out the glitches. The others are Hydro One, which is scheduled to launch today, and the IESO Local, which will likely launch in early April.

If a site user has logged on, and is a member of a local that has set up a Local site, s/he can surf to their local site automatically, by clicking on "my local."

TEAM-IFPTE have a deal!

Perhaps narrowly averting a lock-out, the Telecommunications Employees Association of Manitoba (TEAM, IFPTE Local 161) has reached a settlement with MTS Allstream, Inc.

"I'm very happy with what we've achieved," said Bob Linsdell, Local 161's business manager. "We were able to look [management] in the eye, and there was nothing they could have threatened us with that would have made us cave."

The agreement is subject to ratification, the vote for which is taking place currently. Ballots will be counted on April 1st. The Bargaining Committee has unanimously recommended ratification.

The deal was reached on Saturday, February 23rd. TEAM's bargaining committee had expected that the collective agreement would be terminated, and that the Company would issue a lockout notice.

Key to reaching agreement was MTS management's last-minute withdrawal of a proposal to create a defined-contribution pension plan for new hires. The MTS defined benefit pension plan has been in litigation since the government of Manitoba privatized the public Manitoba Telephone System in 1996. MTS's unions and retirees claim that MTS never lived up to the guarantee in the privatization legislation that the new pension plan would be equal in value to the old one. The union and retiree representatives on the MTS pension committee have no real power, Linsdell said, while under the public company the unions had real say-so.

Under the old, public MTS, he said, changes to the plan would be subject to union and retiree agreement.

TEAM's bargaining committee says withdrawal of the pension proposal sends the issue "back to the legal arena where it belonged in the first place."

Other highlights of the new agreement include:



TEAM-IFPTE Local 161 Business Manager Bob Linsdell presents the agreement to a meeting of 260 members. Bargaining team members and TEAM lawyer in background.

- ◆ Salary hikes of 2.0, 2.5, and 2.5 per cent, effective February 20th of each of 2007-2009, with full retroactivity
- ◆ The variable pay (merit) plan was extended to employees in the lower pay grades, and increased to 6.0 per cent for upper grades
- ◆ New protection for TEAM members against the contracting out of TEAM bargaining unit work, and a reduction in the number of allowed contractors (to 80 from 90)

- ◆ Recognition that the scope of TEAM recognition is not restricted to Manitoba (MTS acquired Allstream in 2004)
- ◆ New protection against discrimination and harassment in the workplace and for union activity
- ◆ New parental, bereavement, and compassionate-care leaves
- ◆ Improvements in the layoff provisions, including that employees in danger of being laid off can replace contractors, with up to four weeks of training so that they may do so
- ◆ A new labour-management committee to deal with outstanding and new issues

Local 161 members' determination was remarkable, Linsdell said. "The members were strong," Linsdell said. "Even those who'd be most vulnerable to a lockout, single parents and single income families, for example, weren't wavering."

TEAM achieved trade union status in 1986, and voted to join IFPTE in 2006. Becoming part of a larger labour body was a crucial factor in TEAM's victory, Linsdell said. "I don't

believe we could have achieved what we have without the IFPTE, their expertise in developing communications networks and organizing," he said. "We did not know how to rally members, to connect with them ... keep the members informed, and listen to them."

Canadian IFPTE employees **Bill Fitzpatrick**, **Brian Lawson**, and **Anna Liu** were all active in assisting Local 161 in negotiations and organizing.

For the first time in its history, TEAM also had support from the wider labour movement. "We had some of our own resources, but we had the offer of financial resources from the Society (Local 160, see *News* 2007:03), and the Manitoba Federation of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress were there."

Local 161 members turned down MTS Allstream's "final offer" last September, with a remarkable 85 per cent of employees voting. "TEAM-IFPTE members deserve to feel good about this win," Linsdell said. "We asked them to vote "No" to the Company's "final offer" and they did just that". No strike vote was conducted.

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