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Getting set for the road ahead: Bargaining 2026/27

Back in November your bargaining chairs met at a bargaining conference to plan for 2026, 2027 and 2029 negotiations. They approved a main table committee to work on provincial issues before local table bargaining begins.

The process of the main table stalled quickly after starting, but we have just agreed to meet again with the BC Road Builders during the second week of March. Like most bargaining, this process can take some time and patience to be productive. We will provide an update following the March bargaining session.

At the bargaining conference, we also committed to creating a communications plan to keep highways workers informed about bargaining updates at both the provincial level, and the local level where members are directly affected.

We've started working with our assigned communications officer to assess our current communications capacity and identify gaps in how we connect directly with members. Our communications officer is coordinating the collection and distribution of the information needed to share updates with

members and gather feedback as required. The communications priorities we discussed at the bargaining conference—including bulletins to the full membership, targeted local table updates, regular newsletters, and video communications—are all in progress. These will start to roll out this month, and feedback from all of you be important to making sure we are on the mark for the membership. Some of you have already started reaching out as you are getting bargaining questions at your worksites - and that is appreciated.

Our union's organizing department is also helping to analyze membership data and develop a plan to address any gaps. Currently, one component executive member is focused on data collection and accuracy and is working with the department



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to confirm members' information. In the coming weeks, members will receive a text, phone call or email to confirm their contact information is up to date.

The component table officers met in mid-January to discuss and approve updated plans. We also worked on this year's member-to-member (M2M) plans with a focus on areas that will be bargaining in 2026 so those members can speak directly to their local chair, component executive and staff. These M2Ms will be taking place in May, so all members should be prepared to discuss their issues.

Planning for local tables has started with the component staff assigned and executive director responsible for bargaining. Each area has specific needs, and we are working on each of them in priority, including the three areas that did not take extensions and how that will impact their bargaining and timelines. Local tables will be asked to complete bargaining surveys to identify priorities for their worksites. Committees in each area will also receive bargaining training or review prior to bargaining. We will continue to work on preparing for local tables while still hopeful for progress at the main table and some broad contract terms resulting from those negotiations.

Although there is a significant amount of work in front of us, we have the full support of our union, the component, and staff to provide the best possible outcomes for each area.

The component is working on succession planning over the next five years as people start to move towards retirement on



Component 10 executive, May 2025. Left to right: Shaun Hoornaert, Rory Smith, Kevin Searle, Earl Haward, Curtis Biech, Frank Anderson, Lana Vincent, Lee Stone, Jim Kastrukoff, Mark Taylor, Edward Brittain, Michelle McKenna, Travis Sandberg, John Cantlon, Dan Campbell

local executive and component executive. This is creating opportunities for younger people in the highway maintenance sector.

Please participate whenever possible—as a shop steward, an OHS committee member, or on your local executive. Over the next five to six years, more opportunities will open up for you to deepen your involvement, build your skills, and grow within the labour movement.

A significant change in our component is that Frank Anderson—who had been assigned to support the component for a number of years—recently retired. His article is also included in this newsletter on page six. The component is pleased to announce that Nicki Pearson has been assigned to Component 10, bringing years of activism and experience as staff to help guide us in the years ahead. Her introduction is in this newsletter on page five, and she'll

be visiting worksites this year to meet you.

The uncertainty in the world today is stressful for all of us, but we need to keep working towards the future and stay positive throughout these difficult times. For over 37 years we have worked through many difficult times and challenges together, and we will get through this and provide a good future for those in this industry, and for those to come.

In solidarity,
Rory Smith
BCGEU VP, Operational Services

On the BCGEU Member Portal you can find your collective agreement or get news and updates.



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John Cantlon and Rory Smith meeting with Pardner Payne in the Tattogga yard

MEMBER-TO-MEMBER MEETINGS 2026

This year member-to-member (M2M) site visits will focus on worksites that will have bargaining tables in 2026.

Local chairs will develop M2M plans for each of the service areas listed below so we can try and get to as many worksites as possible. There are plans to do special delegated local meetings, enhanced steward training and regular local meetings during

2026, so everyone should have an opportunity to participate in person or virtually.

The following **service areas** will be planning M2Ms in May of 2026 with local chair, component executive and staff: 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 28.

Please think about filling any shop steward, OHS, or local executive vacancies to ensure productive discussions during the M2M visits. The component and local chair will add other service

What are special delegated local meetings?



At Convention 2024, delegates passed a resolution with the goal of better connecting our union's locals to individual workplaces through what we're calling **Special Delegated Local Meetings**.

At these meetings, local executives and delegates elected from specific workplaces can discuss current issues in your local, assess steward, OHS and labour-management committee coverage, and plan for how to address common concerns.

This is new for our union, so more information will be shared in the coming months about how to plan these meetings, elect delegates, and how this format will help build more power at workplaces and capacity in our locals.

areas during the year as time permits and are aiming to talk to as many people as we can.

Prior to bargaining with your employer, it will be extremely important to read your emails and respond to any surveys so the bargaining committees, local executive and component executive can work hard to accomplish as many priorities as possible.

We are looking forward to a busy and productive few years ahead.

YOUR LOCAL CHAIR



When you have issues or concerns about work, do you reach out to your local chair? Not only can they offer helpful advice, they also attend quarterly component meetings and can bring issues in your local forward to the provincial level. This is helpful because it may be that the challenge you are facing is part of a larger trend among our membership, and requires the support of the component executive to take corrective action.

Your component executive also creates action plans to respond to membership concerns identified through discussions with local chairs, during worksite visits, or identified and raised by staff.

To connect with your local chair call your area office: https://www.bcgeu.ca/full_contact

HIGHWAYS BARGAINING UPDATE

In recent months, we've been preparing for the next round of highways bargaining, which will take place throughout 2026 and 2027. Below is a recap of what we've accomplished so far—and what's next.

PROVINCIAL TABLE

Last fall, we proposed a meeting with the BC Road Builders to discuss forming a provincial bargaining table or a *main table*.

The goal would be to negotiate broad collective agreement terms that benefit both the Road Builders and BCGEU highways workers. Establishing common terms and language across the sector would help both parties interpret language in our collective agreements consistently, and resolve grievances more smoothly when issues come up.

LOCAL ELECTIONS & BARGAINING CONFERENCE

The first step in forming a main table was to conduct elections for bargaining committees at the local level. Throughout October and November, bargaining committees were elected for each of the 26 service area collective agreements.

Normally, these elections happen about six months before our collective agreements expire. But because the main table is built from the local tables, we needed to start earlier than usual—so locals could elect their committees first and then delegates from those committees



Bargaining conference November 2025

could elect the members who would represent us at the main table. Throughout the local elections process, we were pleased to see a substantial number of new members volunteer their knowledge and service—an encouraging sign for the future of our bargaining initiatives.

With local elections complete, our Provincial Bargaining Conference was held in November, bringing together delegates from each of the 26 local bargaining committees.

Over two days, we heard from one another about key topics and concerns and shared personal stories that helped shape our understanding of the direction we need to take in bargaining. We also reviewed results from our recent membership survey, highlighted areas of concern, and confirmed issues we've consistently heard during member-to-member visits over the past several years.

At the conference six members were elected to the main table

committee: Earl Haward, Michelle McKenna, Travis Sandberg, Shawn Hoornaert, Shea Morgan, Brian Hanslit (Alternate), and Mark Taylor (Alternate) and me, John Cantlon, as Bargaining Council Chair.

I'm grateful for your trust and for the continued support you've shown. I am genuinely encouraged and excited to work with each committee, and I extend my thanks to everyone who stepped up to participate, especially the many new members. I hope everyone felt supported throughout the process.

PREPARATION FOR LOCAL BARGAINING

Because bargaining committees were elected early this round, we have a longer runway before active local bargaining begins. They'll use this time to prepare by:

- **Having regular meetings**—whether in person or by Zoom—as an important part of fostering unity and teamwork in preparation for bargaining.

- **Encouraging members to attend local meetings** and to support their local chair and executive team.
- **Listening to members' priorities and concerns** and building a strong support network for bargaining.
- **Getting familiar with the current collective agreement** so they're ready to answer questions and identify key issues as bargaining approaches.

Because committees are active well ahead of negotiations, it's also important to keep expectations realistic and avoid speculation about outcomes at this stage. Preemptively attempting to resolve rumored issues is not productive. Instead, our focus should stay on using the current collective agreement as our guide and continuing our day-to-day work.

NEXT STEPS

Shortly after the Provincial Bargaining Conference, the main table committee met with the BC Road Builders for an initial discussion and exchange of proposals. While we did not reach an agreement at this first meeting, we remain hopeful that discussions will continue and that we'll be able to develop common language that supports our bargaining goals.

Communications during bargaining tend to be limited and brief, but we are committed to keeping all members informed as we approach the expiry of our collective agreements.

Please stay alert for upcoming surveys and communications.



Provincial Bargaining Committee members November 19, 2025. Left to right: John Cantlon, Travis Sandberg, Michelle McKenna, Shea Morgan, Earl Haward, Shaun Hoornaert, Nicki Pearson, Frank Anderson, Rory Smith, Kaiden Donnie

If you're not receiving emails from our union, please be sure to update your personal contact information here: <https://my.bcgeu.ca/login>

*In solidarity,
John Cantlon
Provincial Bargaining Chair*

HELLO FROM NICKI PEARSON

Role: Staff assigned and Lead Negotiator for Component 10

I have always been driven by a simple belief that people deserve to feel supported, heard, and empowered in their workplaces. My path into the labour movement wasn't a straight line. I began my career in post-secondary education, where I worked closely with students navigating the transition from the K-12 system into higher education. I learned quickly that real change happens when people feel safe enough to speak honestly and supported enough to take the next step. This planted the seeds

for me to get involved in my union and I quickly stepped up into the roles of steward and bargaining unit chairperson.

When I joined the BCGEU as staff, I found a place where my values aligned with my work. As a staff representative, I spent a number of years on the front lines – listening to members, helping them navigate complex challenges, and advocating fiercely for fairness and dignity. My work as a staff representative was varied with some time working with members in the Downtown Eastside and more recently servicing members in local 1004 and health sciences.

Today, as Associate Director, I play a key role in supporting our members and was honored to be assigned to Component 10.

My work continues to be guided by the same belief that started it all: when people are supported and heard, they thrive. And when they thrive, workplaces – and communities – become stronger.

RETIRING WITH GRATITUDE, PROUD OF WHAT WE BUILT

In 2016, a right-wing government was in power that opposed labour successorship in the highway maintenance sector. At this point I was almost 18 years into my career with the BCGEU. Many had told us the die had been cast and that we were going to lose what we had built. We did not accept that. Since then, we have told the stories of the struggles and setbacks that happened along the way, but ultimately of the triumph and success of keeping our union rights in place despite the privatization of the sector in the 1980s. That success remains one of the highlights of my career.

I came to the BCGEU after training in natural resource management and working in the public service as a park ranger, forest technologist, and forensic investigator for the Ministry of Forests. I was also active in our union early on, serving on the Component 20 executive. I had four small children at home. Over that time, I also completed a negotiation/mediation program at the Justice Institute of BC.

In 2001 my life - and its trajectory - changed dramatically when Gordon Campbell and the BC Liberals were elected with a sweeping majority, winning all but two seats in the legislature. What followed was severe cuts to government and legislative changes that attacked unions and left many workers vulnerable. Part of that included a "documented commitment" by government not to include labour



Rory Smith and Frank Anderson

successorship in the highway maintenance sector (something we had to overcome years later).

I was in my mid-thirties then, and I felt what was happening was unjust and not the kind of society I wanted to live in. An internal passion welled inside me in response and propelled my activism. This included radio interviews and many public speeches at rallies and gatherings. When government attempted to sell the Coquihalla Highway and issued a contract to do just that, I was part of a group that organized, spoke out and mobilized against it. In the end, government was compelled to abandon the plan. It was a true victory. How much does that impact us today?

We got past those dark days. Our union outlasted those negative forces and grew again. Highway maintenance worksites - along with the health sector - were a major part of my workload as a servicing representative. In 2007, I became involved in the bargaining in the sector.

That year, I was the negotiator for Service Area 14 in the Merritt area. We reached impasse during that round, and the workers went on strike. It became one of the longest in our union's history, lasting more than four and half months. That bargaining committee spent many days with me in Vancouver at the BC Labour Board making our arguments on essential service levels. That was just one of my many experiences with the highway maintenance sector.

In all of those experiences, with the passion for justice that I felt within me, I was also inspired by workers, showing up to make things better at their workplaces.

By 2014, my experience in the sector led to me being assigned as staff for Component 10 when I became the Regional Coordinator for the Fraser Valley. Rory Smith specifically requested that I be assigned to Component 10, and that decision had a profound impact on life - then and today. Beyond what we accomplished together, some of the most

meaningful outcomes have been the friendships that I have today. Many of those that will last the rest of my life.

Over the years, my roles expanded. I managed the organizing department at that time and later went on to manage the benefits department alongside my Fraser Valley responsibilities. Later I managed the OHS department, during which time I became a director of the union. In 2023, I moved to Kelowna and managed our field service offices in the interior and north.

I want to pause in the highways story to mention the BCGEU's OHS department that I managed from 2020 to 2022 and through the COVID-19 pandemic. When it hit, the department took charge of all OHS issues related to the pandemic across the province. The heartache, trauma and tension during that time was daily, often hourly. When I think of all the things staff and OHS activists did to help us all through that period, my pride glows.

An analogy I shared at my retirement party, I want to share here. It's from a game I played as a kid - snakes and ladders. In the game, you move along the board and may hit a ladder and climb up. You may also hit a snake and slide back down. It seems to me that we are living in a time when multiple forces are throwing more snakes on the board. Your union reps and your component executive are active all the time, killing and disabling many of those snakes. They dedicate a lot of their own time representing you and working to make life better and easier for you at work. I would encourage all those working in the sector to engage with your component executive members and support them in their work.

The sector is at another crossroads with expiring collective agreements and contract procurement in some areas. With this will come many debates, but I know your bargaining team will bring forward your issues and stay firm in advocating for them. I know firsthand that you have strong leadership at the component level for these challenges. It was a true delight of mine to pass on the work I did to Nicki Pearson. Nicki worked for me in the Fraser Valley and I have worked with her for years. I know Nicki will bring her own style and I am confident she will be tremendous in helping guide the component through the next chapters.

Early in my involvement with the highway maintenance sector, I requested to run "shot gun" in a plow truck. The experience came with one of those crazy early mornings so many of you do on a regular basis. It confirmed for me what I already knew. I could not do the work that you do. I wish everyone travelling our roads could appreciate the work you do and the sacrifices you make to keep us all safe.

I am not sure I could find the words that could express how deeply thankful I am for the opportunity to work as your staff assigned to the component. The experiences and stories I have from it all inform so much of my life. The friendships I've gained I am most thankful for.

If you happen to run into me somewhere, please say hello and maybe we could share a story or two.

Frank N. Anderson



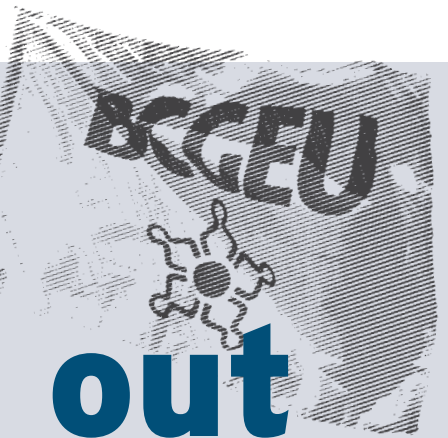
Frank's retirement gift from Component 10; Lana Vincent, Frank Anderson, Dan Campbell



Frank's ministry retirement cake, from the tripartite meeting November 24, 2025



**HIGHWAY
MAINTENANCE**
BARGAINING 2026/27



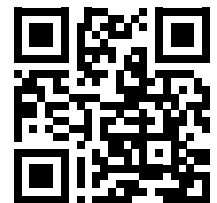
Don't miss out on important bargaining updates



We're getting ready to negotiate new collective agreements, and it's time to catch up. Member participation will be key to making that happen. To get ready, make sure our union, your bargaining committee, and your stewards can reach you.

Verify or update your personal email address: scan the QR code (or go to my.bcgeu.ca/login) to open the BCGEU Member Portal. View and update your contact information.

Don't have a Member Portal account? Visit: my.bcgeu.ca/signup
To avoid delays, include your BCGEU Member ID or Employee ID (found on your pay stub) when signing up.



MY JOURNEY THROUGH THE BCGEU

Hi, my name is Travis Sandberg and I am the Local Chair for 1008 and 1st Vice on the Component 10 Executive.

I have met many members throughout the BCGEU and many throughout Component 10 on yard visits, through our *Be More Than a Bystander* campaign, and various union training and functions. For those of you I haven't met, I'd like to introduce myself and share the story of my journey through our union.

I am a third generation highways worker now. My grandfather Glen Sandberg was the foreman for a small yard in Jaffray, which is in the East Kootenays. He was a well-liked and respected man at work, and in the community.

He started the volunteer fire department in Baynes Lake. As a child, I can remember highway company get-togethers at the park out in Baynes Lake, which introduced me to many highway workers. I still remember the cookouts, laughs, softball games and somewhat off colour jokes to this day. Years later I would end up working with some of those folks from back then—looking your way, Joe Pendry.

When my grandfather retired, he was unfortunately diagnosed with stomach cancer soon after and never got to really enjoy the retirement he worked so hard for. They named the same park in Baynes Lake after him—the Glen Sandberg Memorial Park. During the summer months in Baynes, if



Travis Sandberg and his sons

you get the chance on a Saturday morning to be in the area, go check out the fabulous farmers market out that way, and enjoy the pancake breakfast put on by the volunteers of the community. Or stop by while driving though to let the kids play on the playground—the same swings and merry go round are still there that I played on as a child.

My father then worked as a mechanic in the East Kootenays in the highways sector. He also used his mechanical abilities in the community as he could fix anything from microwaves and stoves to cars and trucks, you name it. He would get calls every day from someone needing repairs on something. He worked so hard to provide for us all. Every night I remember him coming home from work late as he was always helping the contractor or his co-workers with vehicle problems. He worked with all the contractors in the area through privatization: Trendline, Northlands, Bell, Emcon, Mainroad. My dad was worker who people looked up to and

looked to for help and advice on a regular basis.

My dad was a steward when I was hired on in Highways as a teenage summer student. Besides him, I worked with a lot of folks I remembered from growing up. I also worked with Dave Maki on the Bridge Crew—he was a steward too, and the local chair.

When my summer job was contracted out, Maki and my dad were there to help me through the grievance process. It took some time to resolve, but I eventually won a sum of money that really impacted me as a kid in my twenties. My dad thought I should have held out for more, but the whole experience really showed me the power a union can have at the worksite.

Years later I moved to Victoria and worked various jobs when I decided to pursue a trade, figuring that would be better for my future. With my dad's experience (and his collection of tools), it was natural and easy for me to pursue a career as a heavy duty mechanic.

So at age 25, I moved back home and went back to school, doing a pre-apprenticeship program at the College of the Rockies (I would finish at the top of my class—which I could not have accomplished without the support of my parents).

This was all the start of another journey of mine that would lead me back to the highway maintenance sector and then my own involvement in elected roles in the union.

Before coming back to the highway maintenance sector, I worked at Fording River in the mining industry for ten years. This experience would contribute to my union activism later as I witnessed first hand how a toxic work environment can affect a person's state of being.

During that time, I could feel and experience the misery many felt when going to work in a toxic work environment. The situation with Fording became untenable and I ended up leaving just before Christmas in 2020.

With a baby on the way and increasing responsibilities at home, I was now unemployed. My dad's support during that time helped me get through it and after all that, my dad and I were closer than ever.

My dad was also instrumental at this point in helping me get hired as a mechanic with the local highway maintenance contractor, Mainroad. It was perfect, five minutes away from home every night. Less money than I made at the mine but still better than some places I was looking. Also, I already knew a lot of the workers

from growing up in highways and those workers and the management all had huge respect for dad.

At that time, my dad was also quite involved in our union as a steward and local chair. While he was making plans to retire within a couple of months, the enormous respect everyone had for him was obvious in the interactions at the worksite and within our union.

A day that I will always remember occurred just three weeks after I had started as a mechanic with Mainroad. It had been a physically taxing day when I went for my two o'clock break. I was sitting by myself, eating a sandwich, when one of the other workers—a kind and wonderful man—asked if I was okay.

It was then that I found out that my dad had been in accident while on the job. An accident that would take his life. There is so much more in those simple sentences. If you ever ask me about it, I am sure I would share it with you. I would tell you how

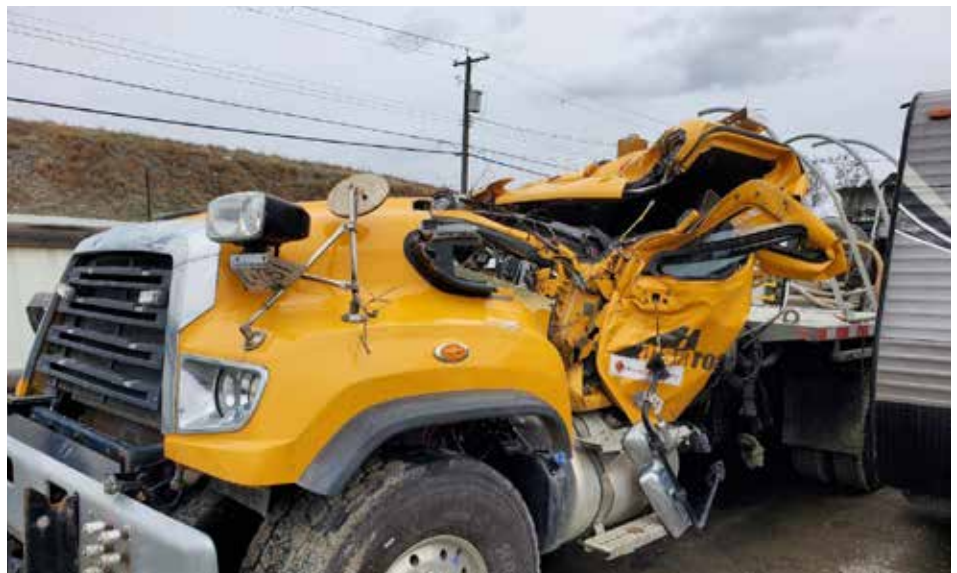
time seemed to have stood still for me as I was processing what had happened. You would hear about the calls I made to my mom and my brother to inform them of what happened. My dad's accident rocked everyone at the worksite.

I ended up taking almost two months off after that. I needed that time as I couldn't have functioned at work.

When I came back to work, a new year had just started—2022. Shortly after returning, I put my name in to be a shop steward and an OHS rep. My dad believed in this work and the difference it made. He continues to this day to inspire me as I follow the values he instilled in me.

I also thought of my grandfather and other union activists like Dave Maki and Joe Pendry who have been there for the workers, and I knew I could be part of that in making a difference.

At that time I didn't see all that I would take on with our union. Besides being a steward, I got



The truck Randy Sandberg was driving

more training and became a OHS facilitator and I was elected to our bargaining committee.

Being elected to the bargaining committee brought more people involved in our union into my life. I'd like to mention two people in particular who have helped me tremendously: Rory Smith, Vice President and John Cantlon, Provincial Bargaining Chair, for Component 10.

They helped guide us through the first bargaining session I was a part of and I learned a lot. For whatever reason Rory found something in me he liked and would get me involved in becoming a pension trustee and taking part in campaigns like *Safe Highways* and *Be More Than a Bystander*. I eventually became the chair of Area 08 (Cranbrook) and the 1st Vice on Component 10.

I often hear people ask, "what does the union do for me?" I can only answer from my own experience. It picked me up from the absolute lowest I have ever been in my life and gave me



Randy Sandberg

opportunities to meet with people throughout our union and others.

I've also had the chance to see parts of Canada—and our beautiful province—that I never would have experienced if I hadn't gotten involved. Yeah, it can be a lot of work some days, and some days it's your day off and people need your advice, but I have found the whole experience worth it.

I encourage others to get involved. Use that contract, use

OHS regulations to prevent you and fellow workers from getting hurt. Use union discounts on endless savings. If you're not sure how, ask your stewards or local chairs. Express interest—it worked for me. And like me, you could be inspired by people that will change your life and have a positive impact on the people you work with, and even beyond.

Travis Sandberg
1st Vice-Chairperson
Local 1008

HAVE YOU SIGNED A BCGEU MEMBER CARD? SIGN A DIGITAL CARD TODAY!

Signing a BCGEU union card is an important part of being a member of our union. All workers at BCGEU shops are protected by our collective agreement, but signing a card will:

- Ensure our union has your personal contact information, especially your personal email, for updates on bargaining, elections, and other important matters.
- Allow you to vote for your bargaining committee.
- Enable you to participate in union elections.
- Provide access to leave of absence for attending union events or training during work hours.
- Grant proof of membership required by some vendors for BCGEU Member Deals.
- Send you a physical member card in the mail.

Signing a card is simple, and you can do it from your phone! Simply visit www.bcgeu.ca/membership and follow the instructions on the page. Stewards - remind your coworkers to sign a card today!

Signature

B.C. LIMITS SICK NOTE REQUESTS: A WIN FOR WORKERS AND HEALTH CARE

The Canadian Medication Association estimates that B.C. doctors wrote about 1.6 million sick notes last year.

On **November 12, 2025**, the B.C. government brought in new rules that now limit when an employer can ask for a sick note. The goal is to reduce pointless medical appointments, cut paperwork for healthcare providers, and help people stay home when they're sick instead of sitting in waiting rooms, spreading illness even further.

WHAT CHANGED?

Under the new regulation, an employer cannot request a sick note for an employee's first two health-related absences in a calendar year when each absence is five consecutive days or fewer.

"Health-related" includes time off for your own illness/injury or for the illness/injury of an immediate family member.

WHEN CAN AN EMPLOYER ASK FOR SOMETHING?

After those first two short absences, employers may still seek reasonably sufficient proof—but the new rules note that demanding a doctor's note for common, short illnesses (like colds or flu) may often not be necessary. In many cases, a worker's verbal or written confirmation may be enough.

Employers may also request documentation if it's needed to



assess fitness to return to work or workplace accommodations.

WHY IT MATTERS

The province says these rules set a minimum standard for employees covered by the *Employment Standards Act* and are intended to free up health care time for patient care—not paperwork.

IF YOUR WORKPLACE ASKS ANYWAY

If you're asked for a sick note during one of your first two short absences, you can point to the updated Employment Standards guidance on "Sick Note Not Required." Sick-leave disputes are typically handled through the grievance process.



Our union's OHS department develops health and safety courses, trains worker facilitators, schedules courses, and supports their delivery. Overall, the BCGEU puts on almost 250 OHS courses and trains about 3,000 people each year.

Visit ohs.bcgcu.ca to find news, details about courses, and lots of useful OHS resources.

SCAN THE QR CODE TO READ MORE ABOUT THE NEW SICK NOTE RULES ON THE BC GOVERNMENT WEBSITE

A large QR code is positioned on the right side of the blue box, intended for scanning to access more information about the new sick note rules.



M2M WORKSITE VISITS IN SA-7 EMIL ANDERSON MAINTENANCE

During my recent worksite visits we met with crews from throughout SA-7 Fraser Valley. John Cantlon and I spent the week going to all the yards in my area: Allison Pass, Boston Bar, Hope, Agassiz, Rosedale, Abbotsford and Mission.

We put on about 900kms driving through some beautiful country, and had great weather. We spoke of the upcoming elections for bargaining committees throughout the province in Component 10. There is an exciting opportunity to possibly bargain at a single table so John explained this to the members.

Many of our members are nearing retirement and as a pension trustee, John was also able to answer many questions about the new pension administrator Convyta, and how the plan works.

Another topic of discussion was training and promoting our industry to the younger generation. We also discussed bringing trades wages up to industry standards.

We had a great week and really enjoyed speaking to members. I want to thank John for coming down and spending time with the crews. Thank you also to Emil Anderson Maintenance for allowing us the time to meet.

Shawn Hoornaert
1st Vice-Chairperson, Local 1004

If you have not seen your component executive at your worksite and would like them to come by to discuss concerns, please reach out to your local chair or BCGEU area office and request a visit soon.

Get area office contact info here:
https://www.bcgau.ca/full_contact



Left to right, Brad Johnson, Richard Lundgren, Sean Johnson, John Behrens, Eric Larder



Left to right, James Threlfall, Joe Angers, Kelly Thorkilsen, James Bekker, Kevin Araki, John Cantlon



Left to right, Chris Campbell, Dave Ferguson, Kelly Araki, Joe Campbell, Hans Aartsen

UNDERSTANDING OUR UNION RETIREMENT PLAN

In 2022, I made the difficult decision to retire without fully understanding what it would mean for my day-to-day life. A month after I officially retired, I was incredibly bored and started to wonder if I'd made the right choice.

After some reflection I decided to apply for a new job and was hired as a HandyDART driver with BC Transit. After two months of intense training, I was finally let loose on the bus. Initially nervous, I still remember my first client, and then my second, third, and so on. I realized how enjoyable and completely different this role was compared to a lifetime in road maintenance. Plus, it provided extra income, which made me feel good about everything again.

Fast forward two years: I am still driving HandyDART, but I'm starting to feel tired. Now at 70 years old, I think it might be time for another change.

I started reviewing my income sources: CPP, OAS, and my BC Targeted Benefit Pension Plan (BCTBPP)—the union-administered plan. CPP and OAS felt straightforward. But I'll be honest: I had worries about the union plan—mostly because I didn't understand it well enough.

So, I did what I should have done earlier: I learned how it works.

While you are working, the plan is funded through regular contributions from both the employer and the employee,

rates are in your collective agreement. Those totals are going into a registered pension plan that is regulated and professionally managed. As a retiree, I will receive 9% of those contributions for the rest of my life.

The pension is also currently indexed to inflation at 100%. That means that, for example, if inflation rises by 4%, my pension will increase by 4% as well. I also understand that indexing can change depending on how markets perform. This setup is precisely what I wanted and once I understood the above—along with the work that goes into the plan from actuaries, accountants, and investment and administrative professionals—I no longer felt I had to worry about my retirement funds. It's all taken care of by my BCTBPP.

I also appreciate that our union does not profit from this plan in any way. To me, that's one of the real benefits of being part of the BCGEU: we've built something together that's meant to protect members over the long term.

Unlike RRSPs, where people make the investment decisions and bear the risks all by themselves, our plan did better during the 2022 market crash than many RRSPs, losing only 7% compared to the losses of an average of 20% faced by others. Part of this success was transitioning our plan from a Defined Contribution plan (DC) to the BCTBPP back in 2016.

When you retire, your pension is calculated using options based on your situation and your choices—



whether you're single or married, whether you want a guarantee period, and who receives money from your pension upon your passing. The survivor benefit levels include none, 50%, 60%, and 75%. In my case, I opted for a pension with a 60% survivor benefit, meaning that if I pass away, my wife will receive 60% of my pension for the rest of her life.

Is the plan perfect? No plan is. But after taking time to understand it, I feel confident that it is managed responsibly and built to support members through retirement by maximizing our pension contributions. I can sleep much better now knowing that my pension is secure and working for me.

If you're skeptical—or just unsure—I encourage you to do the math and take a closer look. I'm glad I did because I know I made the right decision for myself and my family.

Happy retirement to those who are making the decisions I recently made, and good luck to you all!

*In solidarity,
Kelly McDonald
Retiree and former Component 10
Executive Member*

Public service strike



BCGEU president Paul Finch and public service workers at the BC Legislature, October 2025

After one of the longest public service strikes in B.C.'s history, BCGEU members in the public service ratified a new collective agreement – with 79% of members taking part in the vote and 89.3% voting yes.

This agreement delivered important gains for members: wage increases to address the affordability crisis members are facing, a pathway to a new classification system that more fairly values members' work, a new, faster process to resolve simple grievances, and much more.

These achievements were only possible because of the strength, solidarity, and determination of public service members, and their allies. Thousands of public service workers walked picket lines, while thousands more union members joined rallies, emailed their MLAs, and flooded social media with support for the strike.

This agreement is a direct result of that collective strength. It reflects what can be accomplished when members stand together and stay united.



Here are a few of the photos of Component 10 members rallying in solidarity during the strike >>

INTERESTED IN WORKPLACE SAFETY? CONSIDER BECOMING AN OHS LIAISON

Are you an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) rep - or someone who cares about safety in your workplace? If so, it might be time to talk to your local chair about getting involved as an OHS liaison.

Component 10 has long been a leader in many areas, and occupational health and safety is no exception. Ahead of our first OHS conference in 2022, the component introduced the role of OHS liaison to strengthen how we track, understand, and improve safety across highways and other operational services.

An OHS liaison supports their area by reading local OHS meeting minutes, checking in with local OHS representatives, and submitting a short report through their local chair. Liaisons receive training on what to look for and how to complete a report, so they're well equipped to spot the issues that matter.

When reading minutes, liaisons look for trends and emerging concerns and assess how well the committee is functioning:

- Are meetings happening regularly?
- Do we have enough OHS reps?
- Are minutes being posted and shared?
- Are OHS reps taking their annual entitlement to training?
- Are issues getting resolved?

These reports are then brought together from across the

Liaisons receive training on what to look for and how to complete a report, so they're well equipped to spot the issues that matter.

province, allowing our component OHS committee to identify common safety issues, and take action where improvements are needed.

Sometimes that means recognizing patterns - like repeated near misses on a specific highway, missed toolbox meetings before a job starts, or being caught unprepared for heat stress. Working in a sector where risks are constant, it is critical that we are always striving to improve.

Getting involved as an OHS liaison also means becoming more active with the component and the union - and that can open the door to additional opportunities, including invitations to conferences, training, and the chance to become a member educator or take on other leadership roles. It's a great way to build skills, expand your network, and have a stronger voice in improving workplace safety.

If this sounds like something you'd like to be part of, talk to your local chair to see whether your area has appointed a liaison yet. In some areas, more than

one liaison may be needed due to multiple employers, or the distance between worksites.

At our next OHS conference, you'll see firsthand just how valuable our liaisons are—and the difference they make in keeping members safe.

Thank you from your component OHS committee!



PTSD RESOURCES



People can endure a lot, but some experiences can be overwhelming. Post-traumatic stress disorder or PTSD is an illness that affects people who have directly experienced or witnessed a traumatic event. PTSD is part of a group of mental illnesses called trauma- and stressor-related disorders.

By visiting <https://www.heretohelp.bc.ca/infosheet/post-traumatic-stress-disorder> you can learn more about:

- What is trauma?
- Who does it affect?
- What does PTSD look like?
- What can I do about it?
- Where do I go from here?

Source: HeretoHelp, a project of the BC Partners for Mental Health and Substance Use Information

BENZENE AT WORK: EXPOSURE LIMITS ARE UNDER REVIEW

Exposure limits (EL) set the maximum acceptable concentration of chemical substances—or classes of substances—in workplace air. In British Columbia, a WorkSafeBC committee is responsible for making sure these limits reflect best practices and keep pace with advances in scientific research.

Last year, the committee reviewed exposure limits for 22 substances commonly found in B.C. workplaces. All of those exposure limits have now been updated (see those here) **with the exception of benzene.**

Benzene is a natural component of petroleum-based products and is also a known carcinogen. Long-term exposure is associated with serious health effects, including blood disorders. Even at low levels, repeated or prolonged exposure can increase risk. That's why exposure limits - along with ventilation requirements, equipment controls, and safe work practices - are so important, and why benzene exposure limits receive additional scientific scrutiny.

For Component 10 members, potential exposure can occur through vehicle exhaust, asphalt and paving work, equipment used in greenhouses and contact with fuels and solvents. Tasks carried out in areas with limited ventilation—such as maintenance garages, tunnels, or enclosed traffic control points—can further increase the risk of benzene concentrations building up.



In B.C., the exposure limit for benzene is currently set at **0.5 parts per million (ppm)**. WorkSafeBC originally proposed adopting the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) limit of 0.02 ppm. In workplaces where benzene may be present, employers monitor exposure using a range of sampling and monitoring instruments to help ensure the limit is not exceeded. Employer groups raised concerns about their ability to reliably measure benzene at 0.02 ppm using their current equipment.

The review now underway is looking instead at a reduction to 0.2 ppm, aligning with the level recently adopted by the European Union. While this would represent a 60% reduction in the allowable exposure level (2.5 times lower), this level remains concerning because it can still result in adverse health effects such as leukemia, hematologic effects, as well as chromosomal damage.

WorkSafeBC is trying to balance employers' concerns about the practicality of measuring

benzene levels with the need to protect workers from exposure and reduce the risk of disease. In addition to gathering data and feedback from industry and labour groups in B.C., WorkSafeBC is reviewing peer-reviewed health studies and looking at approaches used in other Canadian jurisdictions as it prepares for a public consultation on lowering B.C.'s current benzene exposure limit.

The consultation is expected in spring 2026, and we'll share details on how to participate as they become available.

WORK SAFE BC

If you've witnessed a traumatic workplace incident you can contact WorkSafeBC's Critical Incident Response program.

It's free, voluntary and available seven days a week by calling 1-888-922-3700.

Source: <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/contact-us/departments-and-services/critical-incident-response>

KEEPING THE LIONS GATE MOVING

Every day, thousands of people cross the Lions Gate Bridge in Vancouver without ever thinking about the centre lane—a counterflow lane that changes direction to match peak traffic. But this lane doesn't manage itself.

It's Component 10 workers at Miller Capilano Highway Services who do this job.

Behind the scenes, they monitor more than 40 cameras to keep traffic flowing safely between Vancouver and the North Shore. They watch conditions change in real time, respond to congestion, and make decisions that help move people where they need to go – whether it's commuters heading to work, families getting home, or emergency vehicles that can't afford delays.

When traffic builds in one direction, they adjust.



When conditions change, they adapt. When safety is on the line, they put it first.

Two crew members are also stationed at either side of the bridge between 6:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m., helping clear vehicle incidents, stalls and debris from the bridge as safely and efficiently as possible. They also help with traffic support for emergency services when needed.

Most drivers will never know who controls the centre lane – and that's okay. What matters is that it works, day after day. And that reliability is the result of the skill, judgement, and dedication of Component 10 members.

Read more in this CBC article: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/who-controls-the-centre-lane-on-the-lions-gate-bridge-1.7589996>

IN MEMORIAM

With our deepest condolences to their families and co-workers, we say goodbye to members who recently passed away.



On November 25 we lost Yvonne Ware (Bonnie), a long-time sister who worked out of the Terrace yard.



Joe Pendry was a long-time road foreman out of the Cranbrook yard. He will be missed.

RETIRED

/re'ti(e)rɪd/

1. The ability to do what I want when I want.

See also: 'Not my problem anymore'

Vince Milford

Local 1003

Vince Milford worked at Protrans BC Operations Ltd (Canada Line) as a Canada Line attendant since October 2015. His last day was Jan 10, 2026.

Dave Thompson

Local 1006

Dave Thompson retired after over 30 years on the Quesnel road crew. He was a shop steward, on the bargaining committee and local executive for a number of years.



forum BC

www.bcforum.ca

www.bcforum.ca

The B.C. Federation of Retired Union Members (BC FORUM) is a province-wide organization representing members or retirees aged 50+. The recognized voice for senior unionists in B.C., they also provide access to savings on extended health & dental plans, home and tenant insurance coverage and more.

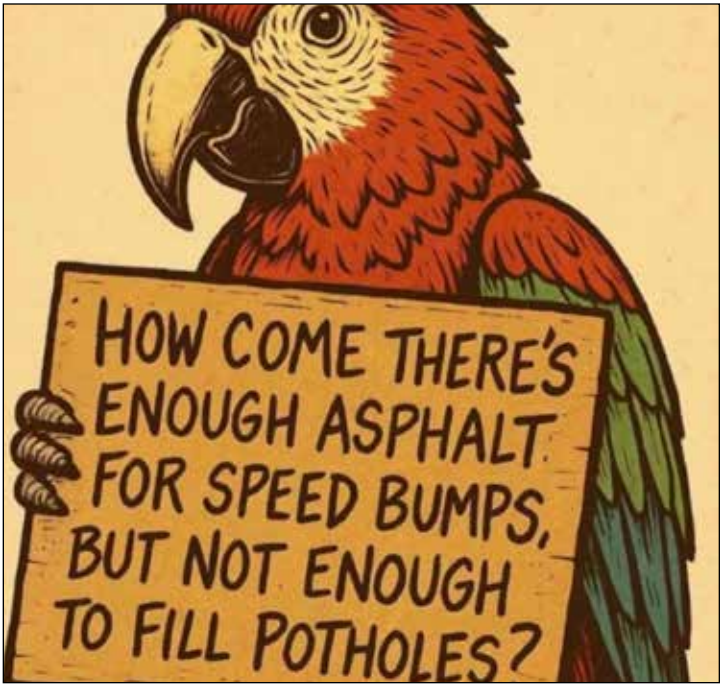
Retiring members may request that their local/component cover the cost of an initial, one-time membership to BC FORUM.



COMPONENT 10 FUNNY PAGES

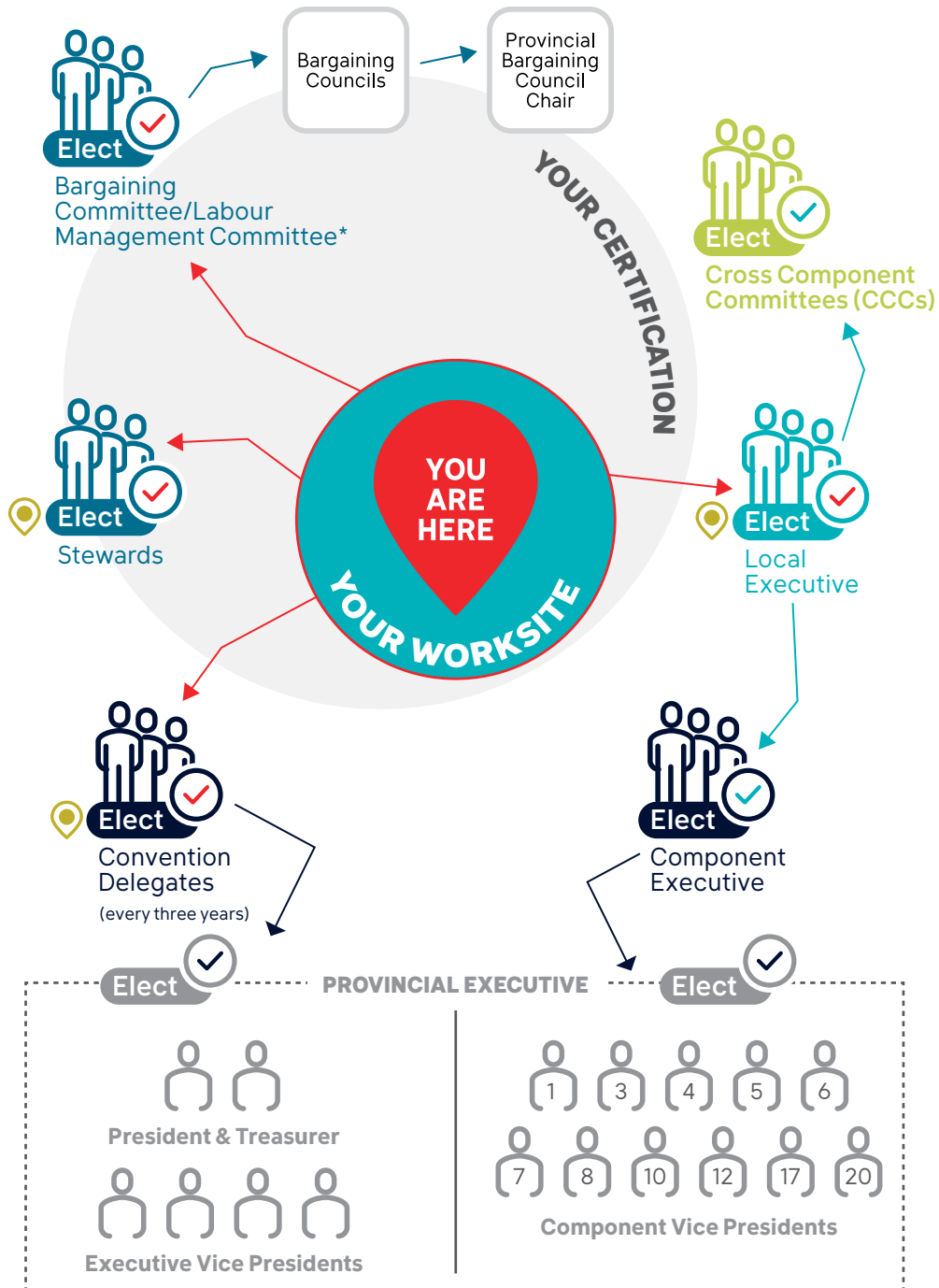


**WATCH OUT ON THE ROADS,
NOT EVERYONE IS SERIOUS
ABOUT SAFETY**



Union structure

The diagram below illustrates where you fit into the overall union structure, and how stewards, bargaining councils and committees are elected along with the local executive, the component executive and finally the provincial executive.



- ✓ Elected by convention delegates & the component executive
- ✓ Elected by BCGEU members
- ✓ Elected by the local executive

📍 Represents your local area
 * the bargaining committee becomes the labour management committee

Collective agreements

D H I N K U Q Y B H O K I O D F G U Z Z L A U M E F N Y C H
 B B W O H W I T G S S R Z J E V V B Y S N Q F J F A R I T W
 V S Z G U W K Z M Q S W M D A U X I L I A R Y Q D Z R M E O
 U Z Q I Z V C H X W H S J I F Z O B H O N U L Y H T T L R N
 P R O P Z Z E P L W A I H J T C Q M T V H M L U H K O S M J
 S H S A M Y Q G L D V G I M E I A I Z M G H A Y N Q G N H B
 E K V E G I H Y Q T K R L Z G S L W D K G Z K G C H T O K C
 C P U Y H R B B D G P F J Q A D H E R J M B R R E N M I E G
 N J N I T I E A B C K M U X U R P V S Y K L K O A B E S N T
 A R A U F I U E R E L F U J G A N J L K L Z A S M U M N H Q
 V B R I N Y R R M G P A L G N Y G C G V C Y Y J Q N O E P P
 E Q T R D W W O H E A D U L A L B X K Q O J B R O X R P K G
 I Q I T W E G R I I N I Y S L P I Q S E J E F S Y E A G V J
 R O C I E J F Y G N Q T N L E Z P R H E W S F Z H N N U U Q
 G V L M S S F O N P E H S I D S G S N N C A E N V O D C N M
 Z F E E E R D F E B T S J D N Z I A I Z W O L E T R U M S C
 K W S L C P S R W C E L F G N G G Z O O E X M C Y V M B V D
 K D T I N A M H A J E L K H Y Y H N U I V N I E M K O S J Q N
 N I V N A M U R Z W K M F B J D I O Y O V X M D G G L P V I
 H D T E W T I Y Q C E R D L Z M R C Z O B S A O L S W P Q F
 A K Q S O J M G H R V T V R Z F I V Q D F K T H P H A P M X
 X N X N L P E K N Y W G S J A Y P F G F N L T F T M A X L E
 M M L C L C R C P M H P P M Y A X M B F A X Q P I F L K N R
 H X X G A Z P M W N L C V G Z N E T E N E Z U D C H Y D U A
 K C Y I T J Q B T W G W O R A T F J O Y Y W B A M Y S N W L

- AGREEMENTS
- ALLOWANCES
- ARTICLES
- AUXILIARY
- BARGAINING
- CLAUSES
- EMPLOYEES
- EXPIRING
- GRIEVANCES
- LANGUAGE
- MEMORANDUMS
- PENSIONS
- PREMIUMS
- SENIORITY
- SHIFTS
- STEWARDS
- TERM
- TIMELINES
- YARDS

COMPONENT 10 EXECUTIVE



Vice President
Rory Smith
Local 1004



1st Vice-Chairperson
Travis Sandberg
Local 1008



2nd Vice-Chairperson
Earl Haward
Local 1012



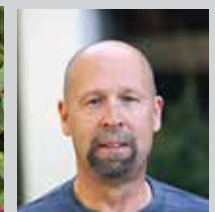
3rd Vice-Chairperson
Shawn Hoornaert
Local 1004



Treasurer
Lana Vincent
Local 1003



Recording Secretary
Edward Brittain
Local 1002



Bargaining Council Chair
John Cantlon

MEMBERS AT LARGE

Kevin Searle Local 1001, Danny Campbell Local 1002, Michelle McKenna Local 1005, Lee Stone Local 1006, Mark Taylor Local 1007, Dave Johnson Local 1009, Billy Mazanek Local 1010, Curtis Biech Local 1011

For Component 10 Executive contact information go to: www.bcgeu.ca/component-10-executive

Story ideas and comments for the Comp-Ten Report can be submitted to Earl Haward at 1012@bcgeu.ca