

Eastern District Report

CEIU Ontario President's Conference 2022

Training in Eastern Ontario was focused on Local 630 stewards with some training of new and existing local executives in the other locals, and training received through various conference and committee activities in late 2021 and 2022.

I supported the Team Leader Standing Committee at two additional meetings since last President's Conference. We discussed challenges and opportunities for membership engagement in this employment group, and implemented a survey of the supervisory membership for future education and outreach work.

On the periphery of Eastern District, I supported the intent to merge locals 553 and 544, Orillia & Barry. This process unfolded over the spring of 2022, concluding the end of April with joint membership meetings, the review of finances, and passing on of essential documentation to CEIU National for ratification. Merging processes take place where the local executive and/or membership feel they would be better positioned through a merging of resources and leadership capacity. It is always at the will of the membership as expressed through democratic votes of each local.

The most significant activity for Eastern District for the year concerned the on-boarding practices and strategy of Local 630 (Ottawa Call Centre & CSB offices). Local 630 faced unique challenges over the 2020-22 period as it swelled its membership from 70 to over 400 members. Building a new executive, new union-management & OHS committee, and ensuring card signing and orientation of hundreds of new hires was a daunting task, and I was proud to provide guidance on it. Special thanks goes to Stephen Richards, Vice President of Local 630 and new District Representative, who worked closely with me to develop a standard on-boarding practice including email orientation and 90 minute presentation. With the help of other 630 executive and guest appearances from Ontario Regional Council leaders, we ensured every call centre employee received essential information about their union. The result of this has been a notable increase in inquiries about union rights and union involvement among these workers. Other CEIU local and regional leaders should connect with Stephen to learn more about the Local 630 approach to onboarding and the lessons learned along the way.

In 2021, Eastern and Northern Districts continued the practice from 2020 of joining together our district conferences. In 2020 this was done entirely virtually, while in 2021 Northern District convened in-person while Eastern District joined virtually. This practice has allowed us to expand the scope and depth of discussion, pool resources, and get more creative with our conference work. 2021's conference included a presentation from a Sudbury labour historian on the importance of building community connections for union local work.

Eastern District leaders should expect a delay in the usual fall-time conference due to my sudden departure from the role. I wish Stephen and Paolo (Alternate) the very best in their work and look forward to carrying on my support for CEIU and its membership in my new role with the union.

In Solidarity,

Sean McNeill

CEIU Ontario Eastern District Representative (outgoing as of August, 2022)