

# ONTARIO MUNICIPAL NEWS

FALL 2009



Canadian Labour Congress  
Congrès du travail du Canada

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## ONTARIO TO VOTE LOCAL IN 2010

**M**unicipalities Matter to working families. When we go to the polls next fall we will be deciding who best stands up for working families and our communities. We have an opportunity to make a difference. In the next 12 months we are going to be talking to as many workers and their families as we can, we are going to organize, get educated, mobilize our vote and elect women and men who support our issues.

The 6 or 8 or 10 or more people who make up the city council in your community make decisions that effect you every day. Decisions such as whether or not we invest in each of our communities economy by replacing or even building new infrastructure such as roads, sewers, bridges, hospitals and schools, or creating local jobs by adopting a 'Made-In-Canada' purchasing policy, or protecting our green spaces and parks, stop sprawl by encouraging density.

Labour Councils have been engaging with their municipal councils and school boards over the past three years. They have their fingers on the pulse of their respective communities and they have come together to analyze where they can make inroads to elect more councillors, mayors, deputy mayors and trustees who share the working families views.

We know where we need to make a difference to have our communities reflect our values. Municipal candidates for councils and school boards are

starting to organize, but we also need to do some aggressive candidate recruiting. The holiday season is almost upon us - it's a perfect time to have the discussions about municipal politics, you may be surprised to find a potential candidate.

This newsletter is the first in a series we will be producing during the lead up to Municipal Election Day 2010. In the new year we hope people will be engaged and ready for lots of activity in communities across the province and education is the best place to start. In this issue, we are announcing the dates and locations of our spring training sessions.

We also asked a few of our Labour Council endorsed candidates who were elected in the 2006 municipal election, "Why municipalities matter?" and a trustee "Why school boards matter?". Their answers are inside.

This newsletter also tells you about labours five key municipal demands that will help us in vibrant and sustainable communities: Public Infrastructure, Creating Jobs by Building Communities We Need for the Future; Procurement, A "Made-in-Canada" Purchasing Policy; Building a Sustainable Fiscal Base for our Cities & Communities; Fair Wages & Working Conditions' and Sustainability, our Green Agenda.

We kicked off this campaign and began the climb to success with a conference in September featuring CLC President

Ken Georgetti, Secretary-Treasurer Hassan Yussuff, Hamilton Centre NDP MP David Christopherson and CUPE Ontario President Sid Ryan as guest speakers. A panel of Labour Council endorsed municipal candidates including Thunder Bay Councillor Andrew Foulds, Smith-Ennismore-Lakefield Deputy Reeve Mary Smith, Toronto District School Board Trustee Chris Bolton and London Controller Gina Barber spoke on the dynamics of working with their Labour Councils and their communities. The weekend was filled with lots of informal discussions about municipal politics.

Municipalities Matter! Your participation and your vote in next fall's municipal election will determine what kind of community you and your family lives and works in. We need you -- you can make the difference!

### ONTARIO BILL 177

#### The Student Achievement and School Governance Act

This Education bill was introduced in to the Ontario legislature in May. Education unions made submissions to the Standing Committee on Social Policy and they have a number of concerns, including the Bill's proposals to increase the government's regulatory power over school boards. As of the writing of this newsletter, the Standing Committee will give clause-by-clause consideration of the Bill on November 16. Stay tuned!

## MUNICIPAL ELECTION DAY 2010

As of the writing of this newsletter, the provincial government has introduced legislation (Bill 212, Good Government Act, 2009) that will see the municipal election day in Ontario moved up by two weeks to the fourth Monday of October beginning on Monday, October 25, 2010. The legislation is expected to receive third reading by the end of the fall session in early December.

## A MADE-IN-CANADA PURCHASING POLICY

### Local Procurement

Governments spend tax dollars to deliver services. They spend money on repairs and construction. They buy printing, publishing and financial services. Governments account for 21% of all wages in the country (and 29% of other income earned by workers, such as pensions and benefits.) In fact, public sector spending represents about 23% of the value of all goods and services produced in Canada!

Municipalities often need to purchase goods from the private sector. Through "Made in Canada" purchasing policies, municipalities can help to create good jobs in the private sector. For every \$1 million reduction in imports of goods, three new jobs can be created in the manufacturing sector.

In 2007 Canadian municipalities imported \$694 million of public transit vehicles. If these imports were replaced with locally made vehicles about 2,000 new jobs could be created. Some provinces and cities have already taken action.

We need municipal councils to adopt "Made-In-Canada" purchasing policies to stimulate local job creation and build our communities.

## PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE

### Creating Jobs by Building Communities for the Future

Local governments - urban or rural - provide infrastructure. We need clean water, public transit, roads, and bridges. We depend upon a whole range of social infrastructure that improve the quality of life in our communities.

In fact, well over half of all infrastructure in the country is the responsibility of municipalities. This infrastructure is crumbling, and desperately needs to be rebuilt.

As the global recession continues, REAL investments in public infrastructure help to strengthen democratic control, develop local economies, get women and men back to work, and build sustainable environments.



*"Locally elected school boards are vital instruments of democracy in Ontario. Trustees provide an essential link between the communities they represent and the school boards they govern, bringing local considerations and community needs to bear in educational debates. There are no other public institutions that touch the lives of citizens as deeply as local schools - school boards keep local schools in local hands, and public education public."*

**Peggy Sattler**  
Trustee, Thames Valley District School Board  
London - Wards 2, 3, 4, 5, 6



## MUNICIPAL REVENUES

### Building a Sustainable Fiscal Base for our Cities and Communities

Most Canadian municipalities are cash-strapped, receiving just eight cents of every tax dollar collected overall. The municipal infrastructure deficit in Canada is huge and growing because of long-standing underfunding. Other levels of government continue to require some municipalities to deliver programs and services that should not be paid for with property taxes.

Property taxes make up the majority (approx. 54%) of local government revenues. This is problematic, firstly because the property tax base grows more slowly than municipal needs and spending, and secondly because property taxes are based upon the value of houses and commercial real estate rather than the owners' ability to pay.

The current recession will make an already bad situation even worse if nothing is done.

Communities need to decide what services should be delivered by local governments and what resources our cities and municipalities need in order to thrive. Where responsibilities and costs are large, there is a strong case for giving local governments direct access to the provincial income tax base. That would allow local citizens to democratically choose to pay a bit more in fairly collected taxes for better services.

The bottom line is that we cannot build vibrant communities based on an outdated model of funding, we need new fiscal arrangements. Cities and communities need access to a long-term stable and predictable source of revenue.

*"Municipalities do matter! The public services municipalities provide to citizens affect them everyday. The role of municipal councillors is significant, we regularly make decisions on water, roads, snowplowing, garbage collection, parks, police, fire, ambulance, recreation and culture, just some of the services that improve our collective quality of life. It is paramount that we elect more progressive candidates that will fight for superior public services, and will fight for a more just and fair community."* **Andrew Foulds, Thunder Bay City Councillor, member of OSSTF**

## MUNICIPALITIES

### Fair Wages and Working Conditions

We live in a country where earnings are distributed unequally, and "precarious" workers, - especially women, recent immigrants, Aboriginal people, and persons with disabilities - struggle to make ends meet.

Almost one in four adult workers in Canada today is low paid, earning less than the amount needed to keep even a single person above the poverty line in a large urban centre. Incomes for the bottom 70% of the workforce have barely matched inflation for the past 25 years, while the wealthiest 10% managed to squirrel away over 70% of all wealth in Canada. This "Growing Gap" is the root cause of many social problems.

While local governments have limited budgets, they can and should resist pressure to contract out work to insecure and low paid jobs. In this climate, it is imperative that municipal governments defend decent wages and living standard. Municipalities should work to raise minimum wages, and implement their own "Living Wage" policies. Good wages and jobs keep money in our communities.



### Municipalities matter because ....

*"If Labour doesn't take kitchen table and neighbourhood issues into the municipal chambers and shape policy there, we'll continue to get more of the same: political solutions tailored in the boardrooms that leave workers out in the cold."*

**Elaine MacDonald, OSSTF**  
President, Cornwall and District Labour Council  
and Councillor for the city of Cornwall

## MUNICIPALITIES MATTER

### Sustainability

Climate change and scarce oil means we need to change patterns of living, including recycling and conserving more, and producing closer to home. With every one of these issues, municipalities matter!

Municipal purchasing power can have a huge impact through purchasing fuel-efficient, domestic cars for municipal fleets, investing in buses, trains, and wind turbines that are "Made In Canada".

By working to improve public transit, increasing the density of neighbourhoods and building more bike and walking paths, municipal governments will stop urban sprawl, which will reduce carbon emissions drastically as people will choose to live closer to where they work.

By implementing retrofit programs on municipal buildings (and homes), using clean energy and domestically build, fuel-efficient vehicles, municipal governments can directly impact climate change.

## COURSES:

Why fight city hall when we can run it and education is how we start building our capacity. Civic politics is a great place to develop our activists political skills and by extension our movements political electoral capabilities. This work also builds our base of support for our political activities at the provincial, territorial and federal levels. In the run up to the 'Ontario Municipal Vote' we will be running training sessions across the province, so sign up, we need you to win.

## Municipal "Fundamentals" or Municipalities 101

Ever wondered what your city council does or how it works? Do you know how a school board trustee impacts the day to day life of your children? Their role? Their Power? This training session will look at the fundamentals of our communities and civic politics. We will look at the impact City Councils and school boards have on our lives. Not everybody needs to be a campaign manager or candidate, there is a role for you. If you want to get active in the next municipal election this is the place to start.

## Organizer Training

Campaigns require organizers. This training will equip participants with in-depth organizing and co-ordinating skills for campaigns. We will reinforce the importance of campaign strategic planning and the steps required to develop such a plan. This course will also strengthen skills in volunteer recruitment, leadership, problem-solving techniques, coalition strategies, campaign organizing and voter contact.

## Campaign Manager

The campaign manager is a key player in any campaign. Whether it is managing the campaign for a candidate for elected office or running a campaign on a key community issue, this training is designed for those who want to put their organizing and leadership skills as campaigners to the test and learn some of the fundamentals in developing strategic campaign and interpersonal skills.

## Candidate Training

Ever considered being a candidate for your local school board or municipal council? Are you going to be a candidate in the 2010 municipal election? Do you know a labour-friendly person who is going to be a candidate?

This training will help with the fundamentals of being a candidate – how to get started as a candidate, putting together a campaign team, fundraising, council/school board structure, how to talk to the media. This workshop, based on the CLC's Candidate's Toolbox, will help in the pre-election phase, the election campaign itself and beyond to describe how one deals with victory or survives defeat.



# Municipalities Matter



RETHINKING CITIES & COMMUNITIES  
FOR WORKING FAMILIES

**Infrastructure**  
**Taxation**  
**Sustainability**  
**Procurement**  
**Fair wage**

[canadianlabour.ca](http://canadianlabour.ca)

## Dates and Locations - 2010

### April 10 and April 11

**Barrie**  
Holiday Inn  
20 Fairview Road  
Barrie, ON

**Hamilton**  
Steelworkers' Hall  
1031 Barton Street,  
Hamilton, ON

**Timmins**  
Day's Inn  
14 Mountjoy Street  
South,  
Timmins, ON

### April 24 and April 25

**Ottawa**  
Canadian Labour  
Congress HQ  
2841 Riverside Dr.  
Ottawa, ON

**Peterborough**  
Lions Community Centre  
347 Burnham Street  
Peterborough, ON

**Sudbury**  
Quality Inn and  
Conference Centre  
390 Elgin Street  
Sudbury, ON

### May 1 and May 2

**Brampton/Mississauga area**  
Location to be confirmed

**Sault Ste. Marie**  
Great Northern Hotel and  
Conference Centre  
229 Great Northern Road  
Sault Ste. Marie, ON

**Windsor**  
CAW Local 444/200 Hall  
1855 Turner Road  
Windsor, ON

### June 5 and June 6

**Waterloo Region**  
CAW Place  
5 Executive Place,  
Kitchener, ON

**Durham Region**  
Holiday Inn – Oshawa  
Whitby Conference Centre  
1011 Bloor Street East  
Oshawa, ON

**Thunder Bay**  
Lakehead Labour Centre  
929 Fort William Road,  
Thunder Bay, ON

### June 12 and June 13

**Quinte**  
Location to be confirmed

**London**  
OPSEU Area Office  
1100 Dearness Drive  
London, ON

**St. Catharines**  
CAW Local 199 Hall  
124 Bunting Road,  
St. Catharines, ON

## A|B|O|U|T|U|S

This is the first issue of the CLC's Ontario Region Municipal election 2010 newsletter series. The newsletter is a vehicle to highlight some of the municipal issues of importance to our members and their communities.

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