



Focus on enforcement

Ministry divisional meetings are taking a new approach this year.

“We want to emphasize the new focus on contract enforcement,” said OPSEU President Leah Casselman.

All the meetings are being held the weekend of Nov. 2-3, with the first day being a combined session for delegates from across the OPS.

In the past, these meetings of ministry representatives have been held over a period of four or five weekends.

“This contract was won through a long hard strike,” Casselman said.

“We have to be creative, and we have to be strong to defend the gains we have made. And we have to put the employer on notice that we will not tolerate another assault on our rights when this contract expires.”

The closer focus on enforcing the contract comes from the union’s Network for Better Contracts - a program endorsed two years ago by the OPSEU Convention.

Under the NBC, OPSEU has revised the way it supports collective bargaining. It has also sharpened the union’s focus on public policy to support its members at the bargaining table.

“We have to make this contract work for all our OPS members,”

New contract is on the web

The new OPS collective agreement is now on the OPSEU website.

You can access the complete document at: <http://www.opseu.org/ops/collective/collective.htm>

Printing the book will take a bit longer. This requires more graphic design work, proofreading and actually printing the document.

Casselmann said.

“We have to make it a living document in every workplace in the OPS.

“This means building a greater union presence in all our workplaces at the local level. And we are going to take the first day of this year’s divisional meetings to draw on the strength and insight of our delegates to do just that.”

Following the Saturday meetings, each of the ministries will have its own divisional meeting on Sunday.

The meeting notice went to all locals in August. The chairs of the Local Employee Relations Committees for each ministry in each local are automatic first delegates. Ministries with larger numbers in a local are entitled to more representatives.

The ministry meetings on Sunday elect the Ministry Employee Relations Committees (MERCs). The MERCs meet during the year to try to resolve ministry issues that can’t be sorted out at the local level.

“This meeting is where we start building for the next round of bargaining,” Casselman said. “I want to see the new MERCs involved in the preparation for bargaining, in enforcing the contracts, and in preparing for the next provincial election.”

She said the Saturday meeting will look at the role of the MERCs over the next two years.

“We have to expand on their mandate and give them the tools to be a unifying leadership force within the OPS,” Casselman said.

“It’s going to mean more work and more energy for MERC members, and I hope candidates will give serious thought to the job they are taking on.

“On a less serious note, this combined divisional meeting will give OPS members a chance to meet other people who do similar work across the province. I expect that participants will also have a good deal of fun,” she said.

The meetings are being held at the International Plaza Hotel and Conference Centre near the Toronto airport.

Check the web: www.opseu.org has the latest on everything.