

# CUPE Celebrates



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## **CUPE** / Canadian Union of Public Employees

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# Together we stand

For CUPE, all convention years are special years and 2009 was no exception. In addition to what turned out to be one of CUPE's most productive conventions, it was a year in which our membership continued to grow, passing the 600,000 mark. This is a very important milestone, particularly given the current economic times. CUPE's continued growth underlines the importance of public services and the significant role our members play in delivering services and influencing our country's economic stability.

The 2009 issue of *CUPE Celebrates* brings many stories from the communities that CUPE members serve and provides some of the significant statistics that reflect key victories.

From one end of Canada to the other, CUPE members worked side by side with staff to address pay equity and other equality issues, while defending their contracts against concessions. Hard-won gains are not always easy to protect. However, thousands of members successfully defended previously negotiated improvements to their collective agreements at bargaining tables and, when necessary, on picket lines or through extraordinary job actions. For CUPE, 2009 was also a year of very important wins at the bargaining table. In Quebec, medical emergency responders achieved significant corrective wage increases and long-sought recognition for their difficult working conditions. Toronto Public Library workers won historic gains in pregnancy and parental leave and more equitable benefits for part-time workers. And, after a 25-year effort, the exclusion of "casual" government workers from union protection in New Brunswick has ended.

Securing CUPE's financial future continued to be a theme this year, with investment in land and buildings right across Canada to house staff and CUPE activities. A virtual tour of CUPE's national headquarters in Ottawa was launched on CUPE.ca in February 2010. The gold LEED building is just one example of CUPE's continued commitment to both membership investment and a greener future.

CUPE's green buildings, like CUPE members, represent the union's continued commitment to Canada's communities. Delivering needed public services to Canadians in all major sectors – municipal, health care, education, transportation, energy and social services, to name only a few large sectors – is what the hundreds of thousands of CUPE members do every day. Keeping services and their delivery public is what the union will continue to strive for in the coming year.



Paul Moist  
National President



Claude Généreux  
National Secretary-Treasurer

# Keeping services public

## The economic context

Canada, together with the rest of the world, is coming through a serious economic recession. The “free-market system” was the root cause of the recession: deregulation, unrestrained financial speculation, an increasingly unbalanced economic system, plus escalating corporate profits but very slow real wage growth.

By the fall of 2009, there were almost 1.6 million Canadians out of work, 400,000 more than the year before. Billions of dollars lost in workers’ retirement and pension savings had not been regained, and Canadian households were at high levels of debt.

Thanks to record low interest rates and public stimulus spending in 2009, our economy began to grow and come out of the recession. As 2009 ended, governments in Canada were under pressure to return to “business-as-usual” – corporate and business tax cuts, public sector budget cuts, privatization, contracting out and developing more public private partnerships. Such actions will make the situation much worse for families and individuals across Canada, especially the most vulnerable.

CUPE will continue to lead, and to work with allies in communities, in order to fight these misdirected public sector “restraints” and outright politically motivated cuts to public spending. Now, more so than in a long time, Canadians are facing tremendous financial stress and will need their public services. CUPE will be on the front to protect these public services.





## Government budget cuts

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Some governments across Canada have already taken advantage of the economic situation to attack funding for public services:

- The B.C. government's September budget cut jobs, reduced services for people who need them most, and continued the B.C. Liberal shift of the tax burden away from the wealthy and onto working families. CUPE BC launched a vigorous fight-back campaign focused on the B.C. Liberals' broken election promises, fair taxation and the restoration of vital public services.
- After the Eastern School District announced its intention of closing 11 rural schools, CUPE PEI launched a campaign to save these small schools. Lobbying by the Rural Alliance and CUPE members was instrumental in keeping three of the schools open.
- The March 2009 New Brunswick provincial budget contained a move to a regressive tax system, 700 job cuts and reduced working hours for many public sector workers. In addition, the government is attempting to get unions to agree to a wage freeze for a period of two years, bypassing the collective bargaining process. The N.B. Council of Nursing Homes is resisting this attack on free collective bargaining. A summer-long campaign by members of CUPE 2745, educational support staff, paid off when the government announced it would reinvest \$2.9 million in the classroom.

## Privatization / contracting out

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Ongoing efforts and vigilance have avoided privatization and brought contracts back in-house:

- Lobbying by CUPE 504 and targeted research by CUPE on the comparative costs of contracting out succeeded in getting the City of Peterborough to reverse its plans to contract out solid waste collection.
- The County of Prince Edward, in Ontario, has quietly abandoned plans to privatize a new wastewater treatment plant because of high initial costs and yearly operating costs that would have been twice the price of direct public operation.
- Quick action by CUPE 105 members kept the Queen Charlotte Islands landfill and recycling depot public. After their persistent campaign, directors voted to keep the service public and the community paper noted that CUPE "had spoken out strongly against contracting out."

- By unanimous resolution, West Nipissing Town Council in Northern Ontario did the right thing this past summer by voting to ensure local ambulance services remain in the community.
  - As soon as they heard about the possible privatization of the New Brunswick provincial rehabilitation centre for injured workers, CUPE 946 (administrative staff) launched a campaign that convinced WorkSafe NB to keep the centre public.
  - The Alberta government cancelled plans for privatized financing and operation of four new high schools. In the past, the province had argued that privatization would save money by using a standard building design for all the schools. But its cookie cutter approach has led to inflexible facilities that can't meet neighbourhood and community needs.
- Patience and persistence have paid off:
- For five years, CUPE 4728 members in Grand Forks, British Columbia, helped make the case for public solid waste collection, recycling and compostable yard waste. In November, the City voted unanimously to bring these services back in-house.
  - B.C. CUPE 825 members in Port Moody celebrated the return of solid waste collection after ten years of its having been contracted out. The local held a pancake breakfast and showed off the new trucks that rolled out in early July.

## Public private partnerships (P3s)

Through education, coalition building and hard work, CUPE has pushed back on P3s:



- After months of effort by CUPE 4750 members who work at the municipality, the Beloeil Council voted unanimously to scrap its P3 sports centre and all P3-related procedures. Through press releases, open letters, flyers, demonstrations and ads, CUPE pulled out all the stops to raise public awareness.
- CUPE Ontario and locals 1785 and 1764 joined with Prevent Cancer Now, the CAW Durham Region Environment Council, the Durham Regional Labour Council and other community groups to fight a P3 incinerator in Durham Region.



### Sanjit Rehal

**Sanjit Rehal from CUPE 4400 in Toronto found attending CUPE's National Bargaining Women's Equality Conference was inspirational: "We were able to share our experiences and learn strategies and techniques, and hopefully build upon them at home."**

## Doug Jackson

**Doug Jackson, President of CUPE 4864 and one of the newly certified members working at John Howard Society in Newfoundland and Labrador: "Is it worth it to join CUPE? Absolutely! People can feel comfortable that someone is going to stand beside them."**



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CUPE CELEBRATES 2009

- The Liberal New Brunswick government decided to use a public private partnership to complete the twinning of Route 1 from St. Stephen to Saint John. CUPE 1190, which represents highway workers, has launched a campaign to educate the public on the real cost of this P3 project.
- Just nine months after the right-wing Saskatchewan government established a P3 Secretariat, it is burying it. CUPE Saskatchewan played a pivotal role in raising public awareness – and red flags – about public private partnerships. In fact, the deputy minister of education chose a CUPE school workers' meeting in Regina in November to announce that there won't be any P3 schools in Saskatchewan.

Another important tool in the P3 battle is information. CUPE conducts its own research and scrutinizes other reports about public private partnerships:

- CUPE BC released a report by renowned forensic accountants Ron Parks and Rosanne Terhart in January and another in November by respected economist Dr. Marvin Shaffer. The reports make it clear that the way

Partnerships BC – the government agency that promotes P3s – assesses whether projects should be public or P3s is flawed and P3s are a taxpayer rip-off.

- A report by the Quebec Auditor General strongly criticized Quebec's P3 agency for massively underestimating costs of its P3s. An active campaign by CUPE Quebec, in solidarity with other groups, exposed the high costs and many other failures of P3s in the province. This led the province to reverse course, substantially scaling back its P3 program.
- The City of Montreal's auditor issued a devastating report that spelt the end for a scandal-plagued P3 water meter contract. CUPE 301 municipal workers could have done some of the work in-house; instead, the City paid to train and accredit hundreds of plumbers from private firms. This contract developed into a widespread scandal that rocked Montreal's municipal elections, and led to the cancellation of the contract.
- Economist Hugh Mackenzie's report on P3s, conducted for the Ontario Council of Hospital Unions (OCHU/CUPE), determined that the financing cost disadvantage for P3s had reached 83 per cent by June 2009. His findings mean governments will have 83 per cent more money for publicly financed infrastructure projects if they do not use P3s.





## Special focus on public water

CUPE works closely on local and regional campaigns with the Polaris Institute and the Council of Canadians to encourage municipalities, school boards and other local bodies to choose public water over bottled hype.

- CUPE National and the Council of Canadians launched “The Blue Communities Project” to provide community leaders and activists with tools to resist public private partnerships, promote water as a human right at the local level, and ban the sale of bottled water in public spaces. Some of the regional and local CUPE activities include: a push to “take the plunge” in favour of tap water in Nova Scotia, an “Unbottle it!” tour that brought a pro-tap message across Ontario, a CUPE 241 (City of Guelph outside workers) campaign with their employer to produce and distribute high quality stainless steel water bottles for drinking public water, and a CUPE 500 campaign to keep Winnipeg water services public.
  - World Water Day activities saw activists across Canada “Toast to Public Water,” pledge their support for tap water, and press local governments to stop buying or offering bottled water in their facilities or at functions they sponsor.
  - The Federation of Canadian Municipalities took a strong stand for public tap water by passing a resolution, brought forward by the cities of Toronto and London, urging Canadian cities and towns to phase out the sale and purchase of bottled water. Toronto and London have already signed on.
- Gathering with other water activists helps engage, inspire and inform CUPE members about water issues:
- In March, CUPE joined trade unionists and other activists from around the world to oppose the 5<sup>th</sup> World Water Forum in Istanbul, Turkey. As part of the Public Services International delegation, CUPE helped expose the forum’s bankrupt agenda of privatization, and added Canadian labour’s voice to the call that water policies be decided in a transparent, open and participatory space.
  - CUPE National and the Council of Canadians organized a two-day “Blue Summit” that highlighted major challenges to public water systems and resources, and drew lessons from winning campaigns. The two-day conference was held in Ottawa in November to mark the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the founding of Water Watch. It drew more than 300 participants from across the country and internationally, including a group of more than 80 CUPE delegates from every province.



# CUPE is growing

## The economic context

**D**espite the recent economic downturn, the past decade has been a period of relatively strong economic and employment growth. It has also been a period of rebuilding the public sector after the deep cuts of the 1990s. Public sector employment grew at an average rate of over two per cent a year from 1999 to 2009, which is twice the average rate for the past three decades. CUPE membership grew even faster – almost two and half per cent for the past decade. However, as the recession continues or slowly eases, public sector growth will not continue at the same pace.

We are by far the largest union in Canada, with over 600,000 members from coast to coast, the first union in Canada to reach this level! A large majority of our members work directly in the public sector or for non-profits, while some work at private sector for-profit companies.



## Welcoming new members

The importance of providing representation to workers and defending workers' rights is even more pronounced during an economic downturn. CUPE continues to organize and reach out to workers in communities across our country.

We had great successes in the health care and social services sectors:

- New members in long-term care homes across Canada joined our union: in Nova Scotia, Parkland at the Lakes, Celtic Court Nursing Home and Bissett Court; in New Brunswick, Kings Way Care Center; in Ontario, Casselholme East Nipissing and Oakpark Retirement Community; in Manitoba, a new group of workers at River East Personal Care Home; in Alberta, Wood's Homes; and many new HEU members at Just Care (Eden), Ayre Manor, Osprey Care (The Hamlets), Sunridge, Nicola Valley Seniors Residence,

Williams Lake Seniors Village, The Renaissance Resort, The Hamlets Penticton, Heritage House (Victoria) and Kamloops Seniors Village.

- CUPE 4953 made a major gain by organizing 284 office, technical, professional and administrative workers at the Arthabaska-et-de-l'Erable Health and Social Services Centre in Quebec.
- Other social services workers that joined CUPE this year include: all staff at Summer Street Industries in Nova Scotia; home support workers at C.M.B. Geriatrics and Bayshore Home Health in New Brunswick; child care workers at Abigail Learning Centre, residential care workers at the Salvation Army Harbour Light Centre, part-time workers at Hamilton Children's Aid Society, support workers at Alliance for South Asian Aids Prevention, drivers at Canadian Red Cross (Region of Peel), all staff at Treetop Daycare, social workers at Hastings Children's Aid Society, community workers at Christie Ossington Neighbourhood Centre and social workers at Women's Own Detox Centre in Ontario; and HEU members providing assisted-living support at Well Being (Waverly & Langley) and Czorny Alzheimer Centre.

We had some important wins in libraries, one in the east and one in the west:

- The Newfoundland and Labrador Labour Relations Board ruled that 135 substitute librarians working in community libraries throughout Newfoundland and Labrador are members of CUPE 2329.
- The 115 members of CUPE 389 at the North Vancouver District Public Library joined CUPE and won their first collective agreement in 2009.



## Special support from CUPE National

Number of legal and arbitration cases supported	71
Dollar value of legal and arbitration cases supported	\$1,910,500
Dollar value of spending on strategic initiatives	\$2,223,400
Number of cost-shared campaigns sponsored	70
Total dollar value of cost-shared campaigns sponsored	\$1,800,800
Total dollar value of anti-privatization campaigns sponsored	\$2,802,650

Some other hard-fought gains in 2009:

- **Municipal:** Our biggest gain was in the City of Gatineau, where 130 aquatic staff joined CUPE 4881. Other municipal workers that became members of CUPE include: waste management workers at Scotia Recycling in Nova Scotia; all staff at de La Dore Municipality, tradespeople at Municipality of Sainte-Brigitte-de-Laval, office staff and tradespeople at Municipality of Lacolle and office staff at Minganie Regional County Municipality in Quebec; all staff at the Town of Arnprior, outside workers at the Town of Penetanguishene and all staff at the Township of Machar in Ontario; and all staff at the Quesnel & District Branch BCSPCA in British Columbia.
- **Post-secondary:** The 276 operational staff at the College of New Caledonia in B.C.'s north central interior joined CUPE 4951. Other new members in this sector include: administrative support staff and research technicians at the University of Quebec at Chicoutimi and all staff at the University of Sherbrooke Food Cooperative; student federation staff at Ottawa University; and teachers assistants at the University of Victoria.
- **K-12:** All 284 casual and supply staff at the Victoria Northumberland Clarington Catholic School Board in Peterborough joined CUPE 1453 this year; also in Ontario, all staff at Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board joined CUPE. Big gains were made in Alberta, welcoming 150 bus drivers at the Peace

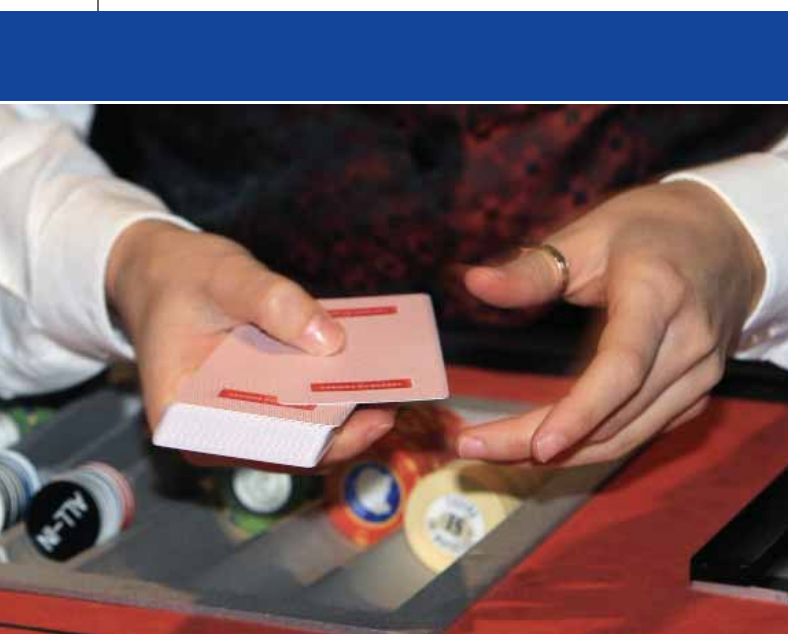
View School Division to CUPE 4946 and 180 clerical staff, teachers assistants and librarians at Foothills School Division to CUPE 40. As well, Aboriginal staff at School Division #79 in British Columbia joined our union.

- **Health:** Many new members were organized in the health sector: in Alberta, paramedics at Vegreville EMS; in HEU, security guards with Intercon Security at Fraser Health Authority, all staff at Pro Vita Contractor (Murrayville & Brookwood) and emergency room attendants at Powell River Hospital; and in Ontario, all support workers at Aids Niagara and part-time and casual service and support workers at Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital.
- **Other new members:** In Quebec, we organized intercity bus drivers at Veolia Transport and, like sisters and brothers at the Montreal and Lac-Leamy casinos, croupiers at Mont-Tremblant Casino. As well, we gained security guards at G4S Medicine Hat and the staff at the Red Deer Museum in Alberta, and special constables at the Toronto Transit Commission in Ontario.

## New CUPE buildings

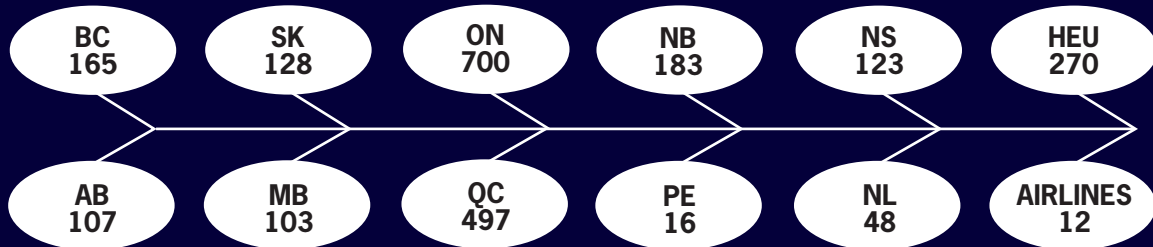
Our strategic activities have included increasing the number of office spaces we own rather than rent, and using more environmentally sustainable building practices in any new construction or renovations we make to our buildings.

As of 2009, we own our offices (or lease-to-own, in the case of Quebec) in: Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island; Dartmouth, Nova Scotia; Moncton, Saint John, Fredericton and Edmunston, New Brunswick; Baie Comeau, Rimouski, Saguenay, Quebec City, Sherbrooke, Montreal, Gatineau and Rouyn-Noranda, Quebec; Cornwall, Ottawa and Kingston, Ontario; Brandon, Manitoba; Regina and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan; and Trail, Cranbrook and Comox, British Columbia. We have new office projects underway in Toronto, Ontario and Victoria, British Columbia.



# CUPE by the numbers – 2009

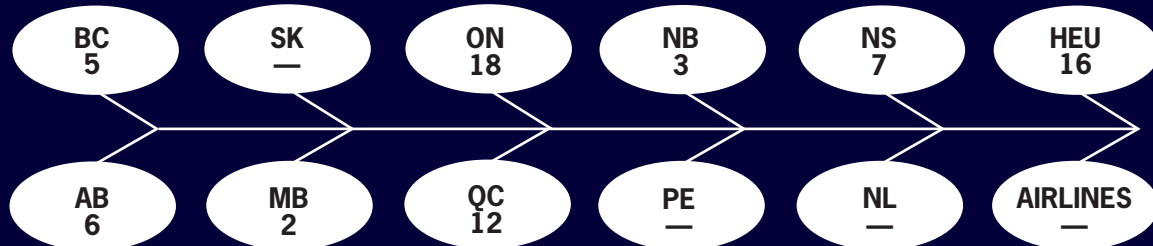
## Locals



Total number of locals

**2,352**

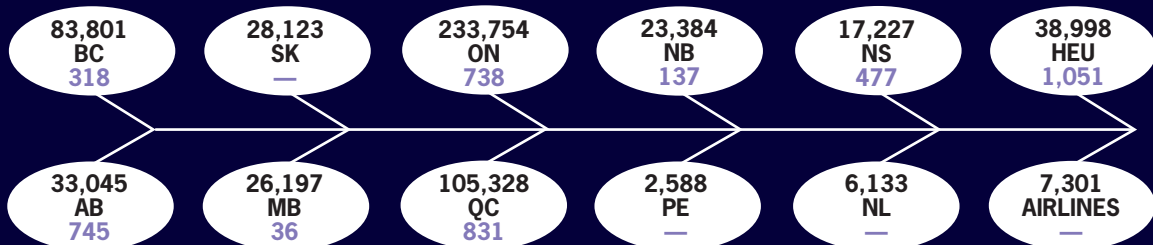
## New Certifications



Total new certifications

**69**

## Membership



Total membership

**605,879**

Members in new certifications

**4,333**

## Largest locals

**NL** CUPE 488  
1,377 members  
at Western Health Care

**NS** CUPE 2525  
1,434 members  
at District Health  
Association

**PE** CUPE 805  
525 members  
at Queen Elizabeth  
Hospital

**NB** CUPE 2745  
2,506 members  
at NB School Board  
Employees

**QC** CUPE 1500  
6,024 members  
at Hydro-Québec

**ON** CUPE 79  
17,437 members  
at City of Toronto  
(inside workers)

**MB** CUPE 500  
4,688 members  
at City of Winnipeg

**SK** CUPE 3967  
5,095 members  
at Regina Health  
Authority

**AB** CUPE 38  
4,543 members  
at City of Calgary  
(inside workers)

**BC** CUPE 15  
8,176 members  
at City of Vancouver

## Negotiations

### Collective agreements

	open in January 2009	settled in 2009	open at end of December 2009
<b>NL</b>	—	—	—
<b>NS</b>	55	21	131
<b>PE</b>	—	—	—
<b>NB</b>	101	27	177
<b>QC</b>	180	53	271
<b>ON</b>	348	284	560
<b>MB</b>	94	75	99
<b>SK</b>	113	24	107
<b>AB</b>	73	62	89
<b>BC</b>	37	33	213
<b>HEU</b>	26	26	15
<b>Airlines</b>	1	1	12
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,028</b>	<b>606</b>	<b>1,674</b>

## Financial impact of CUPE members

Total wages earned	\$21.5 billion
Total income taxes paid	\$3.4 billion
Total GST paid	\$600 million
Total property taxes paid	\$540 million

## Union Development

Number of UD courses offered	863
Number of members who attended UD courses	11,932

## CUPE's website

Number of visits	858,429
Number of pages viewed	2,364,969

# Bargaining in tough times

## The economic context

Increasingly, employers in the private and public sectors are using the economic downturn as an excuse to take away benefits and force concessions on workers at the bargaining table, even when the employers are profitable or under no financial pressure. In other cases, employers are facing genuine revenue pressures, caused by constraints in public funding and shortfalls in the private sources of funding they have increasingly had to rely upon.

At the same time, the economic downturn has led to growing demand for many of the services CUPE members provide: community and municipal services, health care and social services, and post-secondary education services.

The financial crisis erased hundreds of billions of dollars in the market value of private pension and retirement savings and workplace pension plans. The financial crisis highlighted the security offered by defined benefit pension plans such as the Canada Pension Plan and the Quebec Pension Plan. However, workplace pension plans will continue to be at risk of future stock market crashes and downturns unless governments put in place much stronger regulation of financial markets, and expand and strengthen the public pension system.

## At the table

EMS workers are on the front lines in a number of regions this year:

- The B.C. Liberal government passed Bill 21 (*The Ambulance Services Collective Agreement Act*), which ended a seven-month job action and imposed new working conditions on B.C.'s 3,500 ambulance paramedics. In a shameful Canadian labour first, Bill 21 was passed while union members were voting on the government's last contract offer, and when they were following essential service orders and continuing to work throughout the dispute.
- Resolving a more than three-year struggle, 40 medical emergency responders in CUPE 3642 managed to achieve an astonishing victory with significant corrective wage gains and long-sought recognition for their difficult working conditions, in spite of a financial framework imposed by the Government of Quebec on employees in the public and parapublic sector since 2007.
- Over 300 paramedics, health care workers and their supporters rallied in front of the Alberta Legislature to protest action by the Conservative government that would force them into a different union and gut their pension plan. At the time of writing this report we are waiting for the Labour Relations Board decision on the outcomes of several legal challenges.



We have won important gains for part-time, casual and other non-full-time workers:

- Following an aggressive campaign, sessional workers at the University of Toronto (CUPE 3902, Unit 3) were relieved to have averted a strike for the sake of their students. The workers were concerned about the quality of education and teaching conditions.
- Toronto Public Library Workers Union members (CUPE 4948) were able to achieve historic gains in the area of pregnancy and parental leave and a more equitable share of benefit costs for part-time workers. These gains are especially significant for a female-dominated workplace in a bargaining unit of almost 50 per cent part-time workers.
- On the Island of Montreal, CUPE 429 renewed five collective agreements with five municipalities during the course of 2009. The vast majority of these white-collar workers had been without a contract since June 30, 2006. CUPE achieved one of the major issues at stake in the negotiations: parity between short-term and permanent employees, in terms of amounts of leave and wage increases.

- After a 25-year effort, in 2009, CUPE finally received a decision that ends the long-standing exclusion of so-called “casual” provincial employees from union protection in New Brunswick. A 40-year-old law prevented employees with casual status – predominately female workers in the public sector – from joining CUPE bargaining units. In its decision, the N.B. court found that employer practices regarding casuals were “egregious,” and that casual employees were a vulnerable group entitled to freedom of association and protection under the Charter. The government announced it would not appeal the decision.

Some governments and other employers show their lack of respect for collective bargaining by undermining the process and its results even when we’re not at the table:

- The *Public Sector Essential Services Act* passed in Saskatchewan in May requires public sector unions – health, municipal, universities and others – to negotiate essential services agreements *prior* to contract negotiations.
- Without a collective agreement for more than two years, Montreal’s blue-collar workers organized two strike days this fall to speak directly to the public about their predicament.



- On January 29, after an 85-day strike – the longest in English-speaking Canadian university history – CUPE 3903 members (York University) were legislated back to work. Despite the McGuinty government's intervention, CUPE achieved several of the members' key issues through mediated negotiation.
- This spring, nursing home workers represented by the New Brunswick Council of Nursing Home Unions ratified an agreement with the New Brunswick Nursing Home Association that included modest wage increases. Since then the provincial government has been trying to force CUPE members to accept a two-year wage freeze. In response, CUPE members launched a public campaign and filed a complaint of bad faith bargaining before the New Brunswick Labour and Employment Board.
- On the other hand, foot-dragging by the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority in Manitoba led to CUPE 4593 members not only winning a protracted arbitration over vacation leave but also being awarded damages because of the employer's delays.
- Despite the recession, City of Toronto workers – 24,000 members of CUPE 79 and CUPE 416 in total – held the line against concessions through a challenging summer strike. For almost seven weeks, they stood strong against a municipal employer determined to rewrite their collective agreements, using the weak economy as an excuse. And, they built solidarity by coordinating their negotiations and walking each other's picket lines.

#### Job evaluations balance the scales:

And at times all we can do is strike:

- Members of CUPE 966 won a pay equity victory of \$1.6 million in Ontario. These 700 brave, mostly female, nursing, personal support and other allied caregivers working in long-term care homes operated by the Region of Peel, Ontario, have been fighting an injustice for more than 15 years. These women finally got their back pay – but only up until 2003. They are still fighting for millions in back pay after 2003, and to have the pay equity plan cover workers at newer facilities.
- A new *Pay Equity Act* in New Brunswick that covers the civil service, health, education and Crown corporations took the individuals, unions and organizations forming the NB Coalition for Pay Equity ten years of lobbying. And the government has committed to financially assisting five private-sector groups – child care workers, home support workers, nursing home workers, transition home workers and community residence workers, some of whom are CUPE members – to achieve pay equity.
- On July 23, 2009, 1,800 municipal workers at the City of Windsor (CUPE 82 and CUPE 543) successfully settled their difficult strike after 101 days on the picket line. The employer caused the strike by demanding concessions and blaming the workers for the recession. Now CUPE members are working to rebuild the spirit of this community that was hurt by the Mayor and Council's attack on workers.







## Joanne Webb

**Joanne Webb, member of the National Aboriginal Council and CUPE 4800 in Hamilton, Ontario: “As an Aboriginal woman, I am very proud to say that CUPE has put women’s issues front and centre.”**

Through negotiations, public campaigns and legal challenges, CUPE fights for workers rights:

- An important legal debate about the scope of the anti-scab provisions entrenched in Quebec’s Labour Code that was sparked by the *Journal de Québec* lockout is still unresolved. At the end of 2008, the Labour Relations Board (LRB) concluded that Quebecor/Sun Media had employed illegal workers during the 2008 lockout. In September 2009, the Superior Court overturned the LRB ruling. However, a few weeks later, the Court of Appeal confirmed that the issue will be settled by a three-judge bench.
- When Hydro-Québec announced plans to abolish client service positions, the Syndicat des employé-e-s de techniques professionnelles et de bureau (CUPE 2000) reacted vigorously, blowing the whistle on this arbitrary decision through a print and radio campaign, at the National Assembly, and at a meeting with the minister responsible.
- In a first of its kind in Canada, CUPE 3906, representing over 2,500 teaching assistants, sessional faculty and now post-doctoral fellows at McMaster University, won a first contract for 130 post-doctoral fellows. This contract should pave the way for organizing post-docs across Canada.

## Special focus on pensions

One of the lessons learned in the current economic downturn is the importance of public sector pension plans. CUPE has set goals of defined benefit plans for each and every CUPE member, and pensions for all Canadians. Several CUPE locals have made pension gains in 2009:

- Three more CUPE locals (3390, 2605 and 1880.01) negotiated participation in the CUPE/SEIU Multi-Sector Pension Plan in 2009 through coordinated bargaining, bringing the total of ACL locals in the plan to 24. After a hard ten-week strike, CUPE 1521.02, Community Living Lanark County, was able to extend RRSP coverage to all members, including part-timers.
- CUPE locals 951 and 917 filed a complaint under British Columbia’s *Pension Benefits Standards Act*, challenging the University of Victoria’s practice of taking a pension contribution holiday since at least 1993. The decision makes it clear that employers are legally required to let workers know when they take a contribution holiday, and may also have the effect of limiting the number of consecutive years an employer can take a contribution holiday.
- CUPE 8 was successful in negotiating the Nursing Homes and Related Industries Pension Plan into the second year of the agreement at Wheatland Lodge in Strathmore, Alberta.
- CUPE 2153, social services workers at Child and Family Services in Winnipeg, Manitoba had a big win, negotiating a defined benefit pension plan for its members, including casual workers.

## Special focus on bargaining together

Coordinated bargaining efforts in different sectors and regions have helped CUPE members and locals gain strength from our numbers:

- CUPE members in B.C. have made considerable inroads with coordinated bargaining in a number of sectors. To support these efforts, over 300 delegates at CUPE BC's provincial bargaining conference in February were inspired to look at issues and concerns from a regional and sectoral viewpoint – finding common issues and strategies for the upcoming round of coordinated bargaining in 2010. The 14,000 members of university locals in B.C. have since put in place a formal structure to share resources and build a profile of members' work. And some 26,000 CUPE members in B.C.'s K-12 sector formed an historic, province-wide council to coordinate sectoral bargaining of wages, benefits and working conditions.
- The CUPE Health Care Council has found this latest round of bargaining on behalf of 12,600 health care providers in Saskatchewan to be particularly difficult. After almost two years of bargaining, the employers continue to demand concessions and refuse to improve their monetary package. In addition, essential services legislation passed by the SaskParty government in the spring of 2008 deems more than three-quarters of these health care workers essential and unable to strike, which is being challenged by the Council at the Labour Relations Board. At the end of 2009, this situation was not resolved.
- In Quebec, negotiations are underway between the provincial government and the unions representing workers in the health care, social services and education sectors whose current agreements will expire on March 31, 2010. All public-sector unions have joined forces to create a single common front – the largest of its kind in Quebec's history, representing 475,000 workers. Some 30,000 CUPE members are directly affected in these negotiations, and almost 15,000 more members are closely monitoring this bargaining process because their own wages are often based on conditions that prevail in the public sector.
- CUPE's commitment to supporting its members in collective bargaining starts at the top, and continues throughout the union. Convention 2009 reaffirmed our plan to fight concessions and defend free collective bargaining rights. The Organizing and Regional Services Branch of CUPE National provides bargaining support across Canada and initiates organizing drives for new members. And CUPE leaders join picket lines and speak out at public protests and in strongly worded letters to recalcitrant employers.



**Jeanne Campeau-Devlin**

**Jeanne Campeau-Devlin, Vice-President of CUPE 4881 at the Centre Aquatique Paul Pelletier in Gatineau, Quebec: "Above all, unions help create open lines of communication with employers so that we can negotiate with them. For me, this is the main benefit of belonging to a union, and why I would strongly encourage others to become part of a union."**



# Political action

## The economic context

**A**lthough it has been a difficult year for many Canadians, compared to the situation in many other countries, we have not been too badly hit by this recession. This is due to a combination of factors: a booming resource sector, a more stable banking system, a good system of public mortgage insurance, a much stronger government financial situation, and a greater role for the public sector in the economy.

While the economic crisis was caused by problems in the runaway private sector economy, it is the public sector that has come to the rescue of the economy and prevented the recession from turning into a depression. However, with households at high levels of debt and interest rates already at the floor, the recovery will be slow.

In this climate, it will be through many strategies – political action during elections, building coalitions in communities across Canada, and creating opportunities for CUPE activists to share experiences and learn together – that we can continue to protect public services and protect the rights and benefits of workers, whether organized or unorganized.

## Elections

CUPE members know that one of the most important ways to protect public services is by electing progressive governments:

- On June 9, Darrell Dexter and the NDP rewrote the political landscape in Atlantic Canada by forming a solid majority

government in Nova Scotia. Dexter was swept to power, winning 31 of a possible 52 seats (and adding another seat in a later by-election). CUPE played a very active role in the campaign, thanks to the hard work of several CUPE activists across the province who made direct contact with CUPE's 16,000 members to explain why CUPE was supporting the NDP.

- In the May election in British Columbia, two CUPE people were elected for the NDP: Kathy Corrigan (CUPE staffer) in Burnaby-Deer Lake and Robin Austin (CUPE 2052; re-elected) in Skeena. CUPE BC's member-to-member phone campaign pulled the vote for crucial NDP ridings that might otherwise have gone Liberal.



- Five CUPE members ran in the Newfoundland and Labrador municipal elections and two were elected: Bill Wakeley (President, CUPE 1860) as Mayor in Lewin's Cove and Patrick O'Driscoll (CUPE 1560) as Town Councillor in Bay Bulls.
- Close to 200 CUPE activists from the Atlantic provinces gathered in Moncton in June for the second Political Action Conference of the Maritime and Atlantic regions. Delegates discussed the importance of union members getting politically active, and shared ideas and strategies on how to elect a government that will put the needs of working families first.

## Building knowledge and community capacity

### In social services:

- CUPE National, with child care members, advocates and coalition partners, hosted public forums and workshops in seven provinces in 2009 to promote publicly funded and delivered early childhood education and care.
- CUPE Manitoba has launched a "Respect" campaign targeted at meeting CUPE's national bargaining goal of \$15 per hour by 2013. They are building community awareness of the work of social service and child care members, and lobbying politicians on the need for more agency funding.
- CUPE Ontario, with the Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care and the Ontario Federation of Labour, offered a free concert series called "Jump Up for Public Child Care." The tour visited Ottawa, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Kingston, Windsor, Toronto and Peterborough.

### On health care:

- CUPE National is part of the Canadian Health Coalition that has launched an important campaign to combat continued efforts by privatized, for-profit health services to sell Canadians on a two-tier health system.
- CUPE National hosted a tour on health care associated infections (HAIs) and their connection to contracted-out cleaning jobs in health care facilities. Public meetings were held in: Regina, SK; Calgary, AB; Moncton, NB; Charlottetown, PE; and Halifax, NS.

- CUPE National and coalition partners organized a cross-country long-term care tour to make people aware that better staffing and working conditions result in better quality care in long-term care facilities, and that privatization is not the solution to improving care for seniors.

### HIV/AIDS:

- Fifty CUPE members and others active in HIV/AIDS issues participated in a two-day HIV/AIDS meeting organized by CUPE National in Ottawa in May. Together they created a strategic work plan for CUPE, including policies, structures and resources to be developed within CUPE and the need for a strong labour voice in national and international lobbying and advocacy work.

### GLBTTIQ:

- Delegates from over 85 countries attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Workers Out Conference in Copenhagen in July in conjunction with the World Outgames. A delegation consisting of two members of the CUPE National Pink Triangle Committee – Line Blackburn (CUPE 1983, Quebec) and Peter DeGroot (CUPE 391, British Columbia) and two National staff – Joanne Martin and Michael Butler – were privileged to represent CUPE in Copenhagen.



### Aboriginal gatherings:

- Over 70 CUPE members, including guests from Ontario, Saskatchewan and British Columbia, attended the CUPE Manitoba Aboriginal Council inaugural gathering in November. Participants addressed a range of issues that Aboriginal workers face in their jobs and union, such as cultural differences, lack of training and experience, HIV/AIDS, under-representation in leadership positions, and what the union could do to be more supportive of Aboriginal members in CUPE.
- The CUPE Alberta Aboriginal Council participated in "Honoring our Children Pow Wow" in Calgary in June, distributing CUPE materials and literature as well as presenting them to the Siksika Nation Pow Wow committee.

### Sector meetings:

- The first National School Board Sector Meeting was held in Regina in March. The theme for this historic meeting was "Power up! Connect ~ Inspire ~ Achieve." The conference attracted almost 300 participants who were able to define the issues they wanted to discuss, resulting in a lot of positive experiences and feedback.
- A well-attended national Emergency Medical Services (EMS) meeting was hosted by CUPE 1019 in Niagara Falls in June; 20 CUPE locals

from across Canada participated in this third national meeting. The executive committee of the EMS Chiefs joined delegates for a discussion on common concerns, and each local gave a summary of activities in their region which led to a rich exchange of ideas and resources.

- Almost 500 delegates, the vast majority women, gathered in Montreal from February 10-13 to participate in the National Bargaining Women's Equality Conference. By sharing stories of bargaining successes, learning new tools and developing clear strategies and next steps, they built bargaining capacity and set bargaining goals that will advance women's equality in our workplaces and in our union.

### CUPE National Convention:

- From October 5-9, 2,250 delegates and alternates, including close to 40 per cent first-timers, attended our 24<sup>th</sup> convention in Montreal. Strategic directions for the next two years and other resolutions were debated, greetings and thought-provoking presentations were made, we rocked out to a great cultural program, CUPE activists were honoured and members from different sectors and campaigns exchanged ideas.



## Special focus on international solidarity

CUPE also recognizes the importance of working in solidarity with sisters and brothers around the world:

- Alongside the Canadian Labour Congress, other Canadian unions and the New Democratic Party, CUPE opposed the Harper government's signing of the Canada-Colombia Free Trade Agreement. We slowed down the implementation of the agreement and raised awareness about gross human rights violations in Colombia, including the displacement of an estimated 5 million Colombians through land seizures, and the murder of more than 2,500 trade unionists since 1986.
- With the world watching, a CUPE delegation led by CUPE National Secretary-Treasurer Claude Généreux went to Copenhagen for the U.N. Conference on Climate Change (COP15) from December 7-18, 2009. Our delegation included National Environment Committee members Robert Coelho (CUPE 3904) and Carolyn Unsworth (HEU), as well as Charles Fleury (NEB), Nathalie Stringer (Air Transat component), Peter Falconer and Dave Shier (both from CUPE 1000) and CUPE National staff Pam Beattie and Matthew Firth. The CUPE delegation helped to develop an international

labour strategy on climate change as part of the 400-strong International Trade Union Confederation delegation, as well as lobbying Canadian federal and provincial government officials. CUPE delegates also took part in the Danish labour-sponsored conference on labour and climate change and attended Klimaforum 09, the alternative People's Summit on Climate Change that ran concurrently to COP15. CUPE was also active in the street protest on Saturday, December 12<sup>th</sup> that drew more than 100,000 people from all sectors of civil society.



### Contributions to social justice causes by CUPE National

Canadian Museum of Human Rights	\$250,000
Gaza emergency relief	\$10,000
Earthquake in Italy	\$10,000
Women's advocacy organizations	\$100,000
Community and international coalitions	\$172,000

# Moving forward

CUPE's commitment to our members has always been to make gains when gains can be attained, protect agreements from concessions when we are under attack, fight back against privatization and promote public services and public delivery of public services whenever possible. In these difficult economic times, CUPE is committed to using its resources and the power of its membership to create bargaining strength within our locals and sectors. Canada's largest union will continue to promote public services – to enrich our communities and ensure that our members' rights are respected and protected. CUPE will continue to contribute to the strengthening of Canada's economy in the coming year.



## National Executive Board

### National President

Paul Moist

### National Secretary-Treasurer

Claude Généreux

### General Vice-Presidents

Daniel Légère

Lucie Levasseur

Sid Ryan (Jan-Dec/09); Fred Hahn (elected Dec/09)

Tom Graham

Barry O'Neill

### Regional Vice-Presidents

Wayne Lucas . . . . . Newfoundland & Labrador

Danny Cavanagh . . . . . Nova Scotia

Sandy Harding . . . . . New Brunswick

Milo Murray . . . . . Prince Edward Island

Charles Fleury . . . . . Quebec

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Mike Davidson . . . . . Manitoba

Judy Henley . . . . . Saskatchewan

Dennis Mol . . . . . Alberta

Mark Hancock . . . . . British Columbia

Ken Robinson . . . . . British Columbia

### Diversity Vice-Presidents

Yolanda McClean

Brian Barron


# 2010

## The Year of the Steward

In Montreal, national convention delegates chose 2010 to shine the light on stewards. We invite you to join us in celebrating the contribution that these committed activists make every day.

**In the Year of the Steward, watch for:**

- CUPE's new Steward Learning Series
- A new CUPE steward pin
- A new Steward Handbook
- Stewards' Corner at division conventions, where stewards can connect
- A Steward Corner on the CUPE website
- On-line profiles of CUPE stewards
- An electronic steward newsletter
- Division, District Council and Local events for stewards



**Stew•ard** (stoo' erd, styoo' erd)  
*n.* keeper, guardian, advocate, activist *v.* to protect  
- bedrock of the union -

**CUPE**