

Activities of the REVP North

PSAC North members have been encountering tough labour practices by communities across the Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, leading to strikes in Fort Smith, Hay River and potential job action at Nunavut's Qulliq Power Corporation. Zero per cent wage offers have been the norm, with considerable efforts being invested to educate the public about the danger of such poor treatment of Northern workers.

January

I attended a meet and greet in Gjoa Haven, which was well attended, where we discussed upcoming bargaining in the region and I gained a better understanding of the concerns members have in the region.

PSAC also ratified a new collective agreement for members of the Salvation Army in Yellowknife that pleased members.

Fort Smith Housing Authority members agree to a strong strike mandate for their members.

February

Members in Fort Smith set up their picket lines for a strike that would last approximately 25 days. I travelled to Fort Smith to rally members.

Town of Hay River workers went on

strike Feb. 9 (and members still continue to picket). A solidarity Bus ride was arranged for Fort Smith and Hay River members to join together for a show of support.

The measures protect members' defined benefit pension plan and ensure an equal representation of employers and employees on the pension board.

“Our members stand together in solidarity, and the community stands behind them,” said Jack Bourassa, REVP North for the Public Service Alliance of Canada

PSAC and the UNW win a big victory against pension reform, pushing for significant changes to the NEBS pension plan that are accepted and put into effect by the NWT and Nunavut legislatures.

Fort Smith Housing Authority members reached a deal with their employer on February 26, ratifying their new collective agreement that week. Members received a wage that meets inflation as well as pension protections in their new collective agreement.

March

Our team was able to avoid a strike for health care workers and support staff at AVENS: A Community for Seniors after staging a successful campaign that won the hearts and minds of the public.

Immediately after the campaign, AVENS agreed to negotiate a generous new offer that offered significant benefits to members, most importantly protecting workers from layoffs and contracting out language.

I participated in several public campaigns, including a march against Bill C-51 (anti-terrorism legislation), as well as organizing Days of action in Nunavut, the NWT and the Yukon on March 19.

At the Union Development Program, I had the opportunity to discuss with members how conflict can build a

stronger union. There were many bright minds at the course in Winnipeg that I envision as future leaders in the future.

Unfortunately, on the way back from UDP, one of our Nunavut members missed her flight due to unprofessional behaviour by airport staff, and we're now seeking legal advice to seek remediation for the trauma the member underwent.

Looking ahead to the coming months, we'll be staging Days of Action activities March 19 in several communities, including Iqaluit, Hay River, Yellowknife and Whitehorse.

Negotiations are also ongoing for several prominent units, and PSAC North is organizing a round table on the Northern food crisis with many local food banks in the region.



UDP Course in Winnipeg, Man.

The rising costs of food in the North and the lack of government support for struggling families has become a Canadian tragedy. We need to rethink the way we address food insecurity and force the issue onto the minds of politicians in the next federal election.

Jack Bourassa,
REVP North
Public Service Alliance of Canada

Report of Activities

Date	Activity	Description
January 5, 2015	Bill 12 Strategy session	Discussed the possibility of PSAC pension expert James Infantino traveling to Yellowknife to meet with NEBS board on Bill 12 legislation
January 14	Strategy Committee meetings - Hamlet of Fort Providence and and Fort Smith Housing Authority bargaining units	Chaired meetings of strategy committees focused on mobilizing around Hamlet of Fort Providence and and Fort Smith Housing Authority collective bargaining processes.
January 7	Strategy Committee meeting - QEC bargaining unit	Chaired meeting of strategy committee to mobilize around QEC collective bargaining process.
January 11-13, 2015	AEC meetings in Ottawa	Attended first AEC meeting of the new year
January 14-16, 2015	Traveled to Iqaluit for AGM meetings	Coordinated AGM meetings for several defunct committees to get them back up and running
January 22	Strategy Committee meeting - AVENS and Town of Hay River bargaining units	

Fort Smith Housing Authority workers brave the brutal cold on the first day of their strike, which went on for nearly a month before they reached a fair offer in their collective agreement.



Date	Activity	Description
January 26	Meet and Greet Gjoa Haven/Strike Vote QEC	Well attended by members and an excellent networking
January 28	Meet and Greet Cambridge Bay and Strike Vote QEC	
February 1-2	Strike Action FSHA	Members go on strike over wages, pension benefits
February 3	Regional Council meeting	
February 4	Alternatives North meeting	
February 5	Territorial budget	Attended budget hearing to grasp issues for PSAC North focus in coming year
February 7-10	Hay River strike action	Town of Hay River members set up picket lines over zero per cent wage increases
Feb 11-20	AEC meetings and pre-Convention meetings (Finance Committee)	
Feb. 23	FSHA Strategy meeting	
Feb 24	Hay River and AVENS RSCC meetings; NEBS strat meeting	



Day of Action April 19

Date	Activity	Description
Feb 25	Pink Shirt Day	Spoke at the NWT Legislature about the prominence of bullying in our workplaces and schools
Feb 25-27	Travels to Hay River (Mobilization); Robyn Benson attends	National President openly burned letter from employer asking members to cross their own picket line
Feb 26	Strat calls: Hay River and Takhini Transport	
Mar 1-7	AEC meetings	
Mar 2	QEC strat meeting	Planned strike vote for 143 members spread out across Nunavut
Mar 4, 11	Whitehorse Gen Hospital Strat call	
Mar 11, 17	Whitehorse Gen Hospital Strat call	
Mar 15	March with Alternatives North against Bill C-51	
Mar 19	NWT Day of Action	Actions were taken across the North in several communities, including plantgating, education sessions and workplace shows of solidarity
Mar 21-22	UDP course – Winnipeg	Gave presentation on conflict and its ability to build a stringer union



Pink Shirt Day