



Welcome to the  
Canadian Office & Professional Employees Union,  
Local 397

**MEMBER INFORMATION**



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## INTRODUCTION

# Welcome!

The Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union (COPE), Local 397 is a progressive and professional Union with Members who work at Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI), Saskatchewan NDP Provincial and Caucus Offices, Saskatchewan NDP Constituency Assistants, the RM of Alexander, the U of R Faculty Association (URFA), and our Calgary Unit. We have over 1,700 members in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta.

COPE Local 397 is a Local of our National Union. COPE National is comprised of over 34,000 members in Canada. As well, we are affiliated with the Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta Federations of Labour, the Canadian Labour Congress and Provincial Labour Councils.

We are a diverse and socially responsible union, working together with many community groups to ensure the public and elected government representatives are aware of the benefits that unions bring to the economies of our three Prairie provinces and country overall.

We believe that, together, we can make a difference and invite you to learn more about COPE Local 397.

## YOU ARE A UNION MEMBER

As an Employee, you are also a Union Member. COPE Local 397 is the sole and exclusive bargaining agent representing you as an Employee in all matters of employment during the life of the agreement and during collective bargaining.

It is a condition of your employment that you belong to our Union. When you were hired you should have signed a dues authorization form whereby dues are authorized to be deducted monthly and are submitted to the COPE office. Our dues are relatively low in comparison to other Unions and represent 1.5 % of your monthly earnings. Union finances are covered more fully in our Constitution.

The Union represents us collectively. We believe that by working together, we can negotiate with the Employer from a position of strength and cooperation and have an effective voice in determining our working conditions.

As a Member, each of us together as co-workers are the Union. Our Union exists to promote democratic and collective action to improve working conditions and the standard of living for us as workers.

## WHY UNIONS?

Unions are groups of working people who join together to talk about wages and conditions of work instead of workers talking to employers on an individual basis. Because they speak for everybody, unions can get a better deal for each worker than one employee could by negotiating with the employer. This is because an employer will play off individual workers and groups of workers against each other.

In Canada, the union concept of strength in unity came into existence in the early 1800s. Through collective action, workers formed unions so they could have a voice in deciding wages, hours, working conditions and dealing with the many problems that arise at the workplace. But, just as the formation of unions in themselves did not solve all workers' problems then, unions today continue the fight to achieve better contracts and improved legislation.

In 1872, Toronto Printers mounted a vigorous campaign for the 9-hour day and 54-hour week. In the same year, Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald finally introduced a law in Parliament; and from that time on, Canadian workers had the legal right to form unions and to act through them to achieve better wages and conditions.

More than 100 years have passed. Workers have achieved many of the early goals by collective bargaining and by political action. Unions have won legislation to end the exploitation of child labour, regulate daily and weekly hours of work, guarantee paid vacations, to provide workers' compensation for the injured, insurance for the unemployed and pensions for the elderly. This is an important record of "non-contract" achievements and an inheritance which unions jealously guard and fight for today.

The union movement's efforts to gain recognition in the past 100 years are little remembered or known but remain a very important part of history, involving great sacrifice and bitter struggle before the principle of collective bargaining was accepted in major industries and as a part of Canadian society. Historically, the owners of industry held the view that since they owned the workplace, they, therefore, had the sole right to determine the conditions of employment. Even in the 1980's, workers have continued to witness that kind of anti-union/anti-worker attitude which was manifested in such national disputes as the Eaton's, Visa and Gainers strikes over basic union rights.

In these and most situations across Canada prior to a union entering the workplace, the "open door" policy of management often existed. Workers were encouraged to bring their problems directly to the boss. Those who trusted this procedure usually went out – not only the same door, but the workplace as well. The establishment of a contract by a union means the workers have the right to talk back through their organization via the grievance procedure if they feel they have been treated unfairly.

Collective agreements between unions and employers contain many provisions that many people don't know about. For instance, they cover the grievance procedure you've just read about. They also regulate the number of hours employees may work each day and each week, and other provisions such as notice of any overtime to be worked and how much pay will be received for overtime. Issues such as wages and holidays, job security, benefits and paid leave need more than simple discussion. They have to be bargained about. This is because for any employer, higher wages mean higher costs. For employees, however, low wages mean they can't afford to buy things they want. Eventually compromise is reached which both sides accept.

Unions are not just organizations trying to get more dollars and cents or better working conditions for Members. People who don't enjoy the benefits of union protection get benefits too. If you look back at Canada's history you'll observe that many of the rights and benefits we all enjoy were initially fought for and won by unions. The labour movement was in the forefront of the struggles for public health care, for public education, for minimum wages, holidays and employment conditions.

We all work 40 hours a week or less instead of 60 or more because the unions periodically went on strike for a shorter work week, despite the warnings of employers that they'd never be able to afford it. Many of us will receive pensions from our employers when we retire because the unions went on strike for that benefit too. And paid maternity leave has been added to many workers' benefits, largely because their unions fought for it.

Today it is more important to recognize that, when anyone works without a collective agreement, management has the right to treat its workers in any way it wants. Workers would have no protection from a management that could alter any work process or pick favourites and play off worker against worker. Without a union acting as a form of insurance, workers are like sitting ducks in a shooting gallery.

In spite of these advances, two-thirds of Canada's labour force still does not belong to unions. This creates a perpetual and dangerous division among working people. Many non-union workers are desperately poor and unemployment is high. Government and business leaders are well-satisfied to keep it that way, with minimum labour standards and collective bargaining legislation. Time and again the organized and unorganized are played off against each other on picket lines, on worksites and in the political arena. These "confrontations", together with the introduction of new labour-saving technologies, layoffs, plant closures and public sector cutbacks, all pose an unprecedented challenge to the ability of unions to protect the security of their membership and to effectively represent their interests.

Critics from the corporate sector, the government and the media have decried unions for becoming too powerful and for their use of the "strike weapon". This charge is almost ludicrous considering the massive concentrations of wealth and power in those quarters the critics occupy. If unions were even one-tenth as powerful as they are thought to be, they would be able to organize the six million Canadian workers still outside unions. They would be winning more of their strikes and increasing their members' wage rates a lot more than they actually are.

Unions negotiate for agreements – not strikes. No union wants a strike. Strikes develop when both sides can in no other way reach an agreement. To a union member, a strike means sacrifice for themselves and their families. Workers won't go on strike unless the issues involved are so great they are worth the sacrifice. Unions always conduct membership votes before taking strike action and a strike occurs only when approved by a clear majority.

It is inconceivable that workers would walk a picket line in all kinds of weather, sometimes having confrontation with police and strike-breakers, existing on strike pay that is only a fraction of their normal income if a majority of them were opposed to the strike. It simply couldn't happen.

Most union leaders measure their success by the extent to which they can avoid strikes, and they do manage to settle 95 out of 100 contract negotiations without a strike. But a .950 batting average evidently doesn't satisfy some of the public and the press. Strikes are controversial and controversy makes news. This, no doubt, is why many people think strikes are the rule rather than the exception.

Why unions? Because to most workers a union represents security in the workplace, dignity on the job and a means to a better life.

Before unions were established there was:

- No seniority
- No job security
- No representation
- No grievance procedure
- No job classifications
- No health and safety programs
- No protective equipment
- No preference of shift
- No relief periods
- No work standards
- No uniform pay scale
- No guaranteed wage increases
- No cost-of-living raises
- No overtime pay after 8 hours
- No time and a half
- No double time
- No shift premiums
- No call-in pay
- No rotation of premium time
- No paid vacations or holidays
- No paid absence allowance
- No jury duty pay
- No bereavement pay
- No life insurance benefits
- No sick and accident benefits
- No long-term disability benefits
- No Medicare protection
- No unemployment benefits
- No short work-week benefits
- No severance pay
- No early retirement
- No prescription drugs
- No dental programs
- No voluntary overtime

## **BENEFITS OF BELONGING TO A UNION**

### **GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE**

A grievance procedure ensures an orderly and timely process for resolution of a problem in the workplace.

COPE Local 397 is your sole and exclusive bargaining agent and your Union Representatives, Executive Board, Prairie Council and Stewards, must ensure the conditions in your agreement are followed by the Members and by the Employer.

Whenever you become aware of or have a problem or issue, notify your Union Representative or the Union as soon as possible.

### **SENIORITY**

The Union movement fought long and hard to establish the principle of seniority. Seniority is your length of continuous service. As you earn more seniority and service you are entitled to increased job security and benefits such as increased opportunities for job advancement, increased bumping and placement as well as severance pay entitlement and increased vacation entitlement.

### **JUST CAUSE**

As a Union member, Unions offer much for workers. Under the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Code and your Collective Agreement the Employer must prove just or proper cause for discipline or dismissal. Just cause is the proof the Employer must produce that discipline is warranted and necessary. The onus or the burden of proof is on the Employer to prove a case not on the Employee to prove he is not guilty.

It is only after the Employer has presented the proof that the Employee is called upon to disprove. It is important because it is this principle that disallows Employers from acting in an arbitrary and an unjust manner.

It is important we represent all members who are disciplined by the employer. Under Labour Law, Union's have a duty to represent their members. Union officers cannot act in an arbitrary or discriminatory manner or act in bad faith. All members are entitled to representation.

In a non-union job if you're fired without proper cause the best you could get would be minimal severance pay. You would not get your job back.

## UNION SOCIAL OBJECTIVES

*A handout from the Canadian Labour Congress*

### LABOUR'S SOCIAL OBJECTIVES

The social objectives of the Canadian labour movement are a reflection of the aims and desires of a large segment of the country's working population. The program of the Canadian Labour Congress with regard to social legislation, as in other matters, has a grassroots basis. Local unions and district labour councils initiate proposals which go before conventions for consideration. The labour movement's policies on social and other issues come under scrutiny by rank-and-file delegates to these conventions and their decisions determine objectives to be sought from the various levels of government by the Canadian Labour Congress, its affiliated organizations, and its chartered provincial federations of labour and chartered labour councils.

The interest of the organized labour movement in social issues goes back many years. A desire to put in place social changes was one of the strongest influences in bringing about a working relationship between individual unions and the development of central labour organizations. Today this continues to be a unifying force in the structure of the Canadian Labour Congress.

As early as the late 1800's, Canadian trade unionists were actively seeking legislative changes which would improve working conditions, not only for themselves but for all workers. They wanted factory laws to control and improve working conditions and safety practices; the abolition of piece work and the elimination of "sweat shops"; an end to the use of prison labour in competition with other workers; abolition of child labour and the imposition of regulations covering the employment of women; and shorter hours – the eight-hour day and six-day week.

But the interests of the movement were not restricted to conditions of employment and working conditions. There were resolutions for expansion of educational facilities, including the introduction of some form of technical education.

In the deliberations of labour conventions since 1898, there have been changes, sometimes in subject matter and sometimes only in emphasis: **but there has always been a persistent theme of concern with social issues which affect all citizens.** The trade union movement has seen itself as a spokesperson for ordinary working Canadians in these issues.

#### Health Programs

By their very nature, unions have always been involved in protecting the occupational health and safety of their members; and where medical services and facilities did not exist, unions were frequently the pioneers in helping to establish them within the community. Unions also pioneered in negotiating prepaid medical care programs for their members and families; and such coverage became commonplace. However, the lack of available health care to all Canadians caused the labour movement to redouble its long-standing efforts to have a national Medicare plan by which **needed medical services would be available to all Canadians whatever their financial means.** This was eventually achieved.

Today the labour movement, along with others, is faced with the task of not only establishing and maintaining a system which is universal in application and comprehensive in coverage, but also for a plan that does not have an economic barrier between the service and those who need it.

Medicare as a system of universal health care must be regarded as a public service and not merely as an insurance program under which only a limited number of services are available. Canadians should not be obliged to pay extra charges for any type of health care service. Preventing the erosion of Medicare must now be considered a major target of Canadian development

## **Pensions**

In the area of pensions, unions have consistently negotiated improvements in their private pension plans and worked toward greater control of these plans by the workers involved

**Only 41.4 percent of employed Canadians (50.1 percent of men and 33.7 percent of women) belong to company pension plans – including the plans that governments establish for their own employees.**

All others must rely on the woefully inadequate Old Age Pension plus Canada or Quebec Pension Plans.

Since the mid-1970's, a major debate on pension reform has been taking place. Throughout this debate, the CLC has argued that Canada and Quebec Pension Plan benefits must be doubled. This is the only way that retiring workers and their surviving spouses will be able to maintain their standard of living in retirement.

The Congress – and virtually all other labour organizations and women's and retiree's groups – has called for:

- increases in the benefits under Old Age Security and Guaranteed Income Supplement to make sure that all older Canadians have income above the poverty line;
- changes to the design of the Canada Pension Plan to improve its fairness to women and homemakers; and
- changes to the regulations governing company pension plans.

The CLC is convinced that an upgraded universal plan would eliminate any fear and want from old age.

## **Poverty and Regional Disparities**

The Canadian Labour Congress has continually drawn attention to the unjust disparities existing among various sections of Canadian society and among different regions.

In an effort to establish a **higher degree of equality**, a program has been advanced which includes:

- a full employment program for all those able and willing to work, complemented by a meaningful manpower program;
- a guaranteed annual income;
- a major revision, strengthening and expansion of the present inadequate social security and transfer payment programs;
- improvements in minimum wage legislation to guarantee a decent income for all Canadians.

## Human Rights

The Canadian Labour Congress has devoted considerable effort to combating discrimination and protecting basic human rights. To this end, there has been a continual effort to obtain the enactment of more effective legislation, coupled with adequate enforcement machinery. There is also a standing proposal for the inclusion in collective agreements of a clause to prevent discrimination against employees for reason of race, colour, sex, national origin, union activity or age.

The plight of the Indians, Inuit and Métis of Canada is of deep concern to union members and proposals have been advanced for providing assistance in the form of decent housing, proper health and sanitation facilities and adequate educational and job opportunities, as well as recognition of treaty or aboriginal rights.

## Education

A basic human right, education must be available to all Canadians. The labour movement has, since its inception, promoted a policy of free and equal access to all levels of education. A publicly-funded system, schools must respond to the needs of their communities, their students and society. **The responsibility to present a well-rounded picture of all participating partners in the Canadian mosaic is a basic principle of an education system.**

The ability to learn and the right to education are not limited to children and adolescents. The CLC believes that new emphasis must be placed on the changing personal and manpower goals of adults. The necessary programs and funding must be put in place to encourage lifelong learning, to utilize the full potential of our society. Paid educational leave, providing normal earnings and benefits during a period of leave from the labour force to return to school, is the mechanism to ensure access to recurrent education for all Canadians.

Curriculum content in schools must include a history and review of the contributions that unions have made in the development of this country.

## Immigration

The Canadian Labour Congress has never opposed immigration, but it has taken the position that the immigration program must be geared to the needs of the economy. The admission of immigrants for whom there are no jobs and no houses is regarded as a disservice, both to the immigrants and to Canada. The CLC has consistently fought against all forms of discrimination in the country's immigration policy.

## Housing

Although the government has improved housing programs in recent years, more effort should be directed to medium-and low-income people. Not only the construction of new houses, but also the rehabilitation of existing houses in substandard condition is required.

To accomplish this the CLC advocates:

- that housing be regarded by governments as a social need and not as a regulator of economic activity;
- that the principle of a subsidized mortgage rate be recognized and applied in such a way as to make housing available to that part of the population whose income is otherwise insufficient;
- that massive land assembly programs be instituted with procedures to identify the obstacles to such programs and the provisions of means to cope with them;
- that urban land be acquired by public agencies and held in perpetuity to be leased to meet Canada's housing needs;
- that the amount of money for housing supplied by the federal government be substantially increased and primarily directed to finance housing for lower and middle-income groups;
- that steps be taken to improve the quality of social and other services connected with public housing;
- that imaginative educational programs be under-taken by the appropriate agencies of government, designed to overcome the opposition to public housing.

The CLC has always given strong support to the co-operative movement in all its activities and has favoured adoption of the co-operative approach in housing. It has also sought expansion of programs for slum clearance and urban renewal

## **Taxation**

Taxation policies are naturally a matter of concern to Canadian workers. In the deliberations of the Canadian Labour Congress there has been full recognition that many of the proposals being advanced require the expenditure of additional funds. At the same time, there is a strong feeling among union members that adjustments should be made **to distribute more equitably the burden of taxes.**

The report of the Royal Commission on Taxation (the Carter Report), which described the existing taxation system as unfair, received strong support from the CLC.

This applied particularly to the Carter recommendation designed to relate taxes more directly to ability to pay and saying that the base for taxation purposes should be the family unit and not the individual. The report proposed to treat, for tax purposes, all forms of income alike regardless of their source, an approach that has been referred to as "a buck is a buck" and the principle of which the CLC has endorsed.

## **Consumer Services**

Members of trade unions are consumers as well as producers and the CLC recognizes the existence of a very great need for more vigorous action to protect the interests of all consumers, union members and the public at large.

With this in mind, efforts have been made to have the government undertake an investigation of **the disparity between food prices paid to farmers and those charged to consumers.**

At the same time, the CLC favours:

- improvements in the legislation dealing with truth in advertising and packaging;
- extension of consumer education and promotion of cooperatives;
- legislation to reduce interest rates on small loans;
- support for cooperatives and credit unions.

The CLC is opposed to the use of trading stamps and similar practices and has called for legislation to protect consumers from some of the dangers of unrestricted implementation of the automatic checkout system in supermarkets, called the Universal Product Code.

## COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

The Collective Agreement is your Contract of Employment. John P. Sanderson, in his book, The Art of Collective Bargaining wrote:

“In a general sense, a collective agreement is a collection of commitments in writing by an employer, a union and a group of employees to do certain things and not to do certain other things. More importantly, it is a living record of the continuing relationship between an employer, a union and a group of employees, binding on them all, to be respected or reviled but, in any event, to govern the relationship of the parties and provide a code of conduct for them to follow and enforce against each other.”

Your fellow members fought long and hard to acquire the wages and working conditions in our union contract. As new members, we get to enjoy these benefits but we also have a responsibility to maintain them. It is your duty to uphold these benefits and make union officers and staff aware of any erosion of working conditions or any incidents where the company does not uphold the collective agreement.

## COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Employees joining together and participating in a union are what make a union work. Our ability to win better working conditions and salaries depends on the strength we have as a group. This collective strength is why unionized employees earn higher wages and have better working conditions, more benefits and legal rights than non-unionized employees.

The contract that you live and work with today is part of an evolutionary process. It should be better than the previous agreement, but not as good as the next one.

The collective agreement, as a document, is really the end result of a process that begins at the time the previous agreement was concluded.

Both sides, Union and Employer, enter the process with definite goals they want to accomplish. How successful they are depends in large part upon their strength when they go into it, their strength as they move through it, and their strength as they come out of it. Collective bargaining always involves a contest of strength between two competing forces.

Simply put, the contest comes from the fact that labour and management have clearly opposing interests, and different points of view.

The goal of management is to operate the workplace in an efficient and profitable manner. This means that they want to operate with as few restrictions as possible, while getting as much work from their Employees as they can at the cheapest cost they can get away with.

In other words, they want more work for less money.

The goals of the Union, on the other hand, are to see that the workplace operates in a way which does not damage the quality of life of the workers. This means that we need to restrict the employers' right to make arbitrary decisions, while earning enough money to provide for ourselves and our families, and with as much time away from work as possible in order to spend time with our families, and on our hobbies.

In other words, we want a fair day's pay for a fair day's work.

In the collective bargaining process, the two sides meet, and argue for their basic interests. Each side eventually gets somewhat less than it wanted, but a level that each can agree upon and live with for awhile is always arrived at sooner or later. At that point, a collective agreement is signed outlining the terms of the settlement. Union members elect their own bargaining committee and decide what to propose as changes in their contract.

Members should read their Collective Bargaining Agreement and if they have any questions, call the Union office.

## **The Collective Bargaining Process**

Each Collective Agreement has a specified term (usually 1, 2 or 3 years) and must be renegotiated each time it expires.

It is during this negotiating procedure, called Collective Bargaining that new salaries are determined and many of the other articles of the Agreement are discussed and amended.

A member of the full-time staff usually leads negotiations, assisted by a Committee elected by, and from among, the Executive Officers and Prairie Council of COPE Local 397.

Prior to the beginning of negotiations all members of the bargaining unit are invited to submit their suggestions for improving the terms and conditions of the Collective Agreement.

Once the compiled proposal suggestions are agreed upon by the Prairie Council, your Bargaining Committee formally meets the management representatives at negotiations.

Each proposal must be explained and supported. Gradually the process of bargaining changes the proposal to a form that the parties can agree to and, one by one they are subsequently either signed off or withdrawn.

When negotiations reach an impasse (e.g. the employer claims to have made his “final” offer on outstanding items and your negotiating committee feels it cannot recommend those proposed terms of settlement) it may become necessary to obtain a job action/strike vote mandate.

This mandate gives your negotiating committee the power to apply pressure to obtain further concessions at the bargaining table. It is not uncommon for the employer to table several so-called “final offers”, each a bit better than the last, before your negotiating committee feels it can recommend the proposed terms of settlement. Sometime a ban on overtime, “working to rule,” or some other form of job action will be required to effect such a settlement. An “all out” strike is authorized only in instances where less costly action is ineffective.

Mediation and the Labour Relations Board may be made available to the parties in an effort to help them resolve a conflict or potential conflict.

Finally, when your Bargaining Committee feels the proposed terms of settlement are the best they can hope to achieve, you still have the final say for the purpose of ratifying the proposed settlement. Only when you and the other members in your bargaining unit vote by majority to accept the proposed terms do they become part of your Collective Agreement.

**DO'S AND DON'TS  
FOR MEMBERSHIP DURING NEGOTIATIONS:**

- DO** support your Bargaining Committee's efforts and strategies;
- DO** attend all union meetings;
- DO** support the democratic decision of the majority;
- DO** recognize that it is not in your own best interests for your Bargaining Committee to release detailed information until negotiations are almost ended;
- DO** put a quick stop to rumours by getting the correct facts from your Union Representative or Bargaining Committee;
- DO** maintain solidarity.
  
- DON'T** circulate petitions of any sort;
- DON'T** believe anything you hear or see in the news media unless it is confirmed by your Bargaining Committee;
- DON'T** perpetuate rumours;
- DON'T** criticize the democratic decisions of the majority.

**IF YOU HAVE A CONCERN ABOUT CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS  
PLEASE TALK TO YOUR BARGAINING COMMITTEE  
DO NOT TALK TO MANAGEMENT**

## **IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM**

Anything to do with your employment; wages, promotion, overtime, welfare plans, discipline, etc., **SEE YOUR UNION REPRESENTATIVE, STEWARD, EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBER OR PRAIRIE COUNCIL MEMBER.**

They will be able to determine whether or not you have a legitimate complaint and can accompany you when you talk to your Manager or Supervisor about your issue.

### **IT IS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YOU ENLIST THE UNION'S AID IN PROCESSING YOUR COMPLAINT**

The Union is there to advise you, to protect your rights, and to act as witness to any statements or commitments made. This is very important should your issue subsequently be taken to the higher stages (see your Collective Agreement; the Article titled "Grievances").

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF COPE LOCAL 397

### HOW THE UNION WORKS

#### Staff:



**Cory Szczepanski**, as a COPE Local 397 Union Representative, specializes in negotiations, grievances, arbitrations, and day-to-day member issues with Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI), the NDP Constituency Assistants, the NDP Provincial and Caucus Offices, and the Calgary Unit, global issues affecting COPE Local 397 membership, organizing new members, and Union member education. As well, he has involvement in various SGI Committees and other general committee work.



**Rhonda Derby**, as a COPE Local 397 Union Representative, specializes in negotiations, grievances, arbitrations, and day-to-day member issues with Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI), the RM of Alexander and URFA, global issues affecting COPE Local 397 membership, organizing new members, and Union member education. As well, she has involvement in various SGI Committees and other general committee work.

***Vacant***, as the COPE Local 397 Organizer, is responsible for organizing the unorganized into the COPE Local 397 family.



**Patti Harris**, as the COPE Local 397 Office Administrator, is responsible to provide a full and comprehensive range of support activities for the Union Representatives, the Union Organizer, the Executive Board and Committees, which include day-to-day activities in the operation of the COPE Local 397 office, as well as designing bulletins, posters and newsletters together with the maintenance of our website.



**Tricia Klassen**, as a COPE Local 397 Administrative Assistant, provides general clerical and administrative support in the day-to-day activities of the Union Organizer and the operation of the COPE Local 397 office.

# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF COPE LOCAL 397

## HOW THE UNION WORKS

### Membership Participation

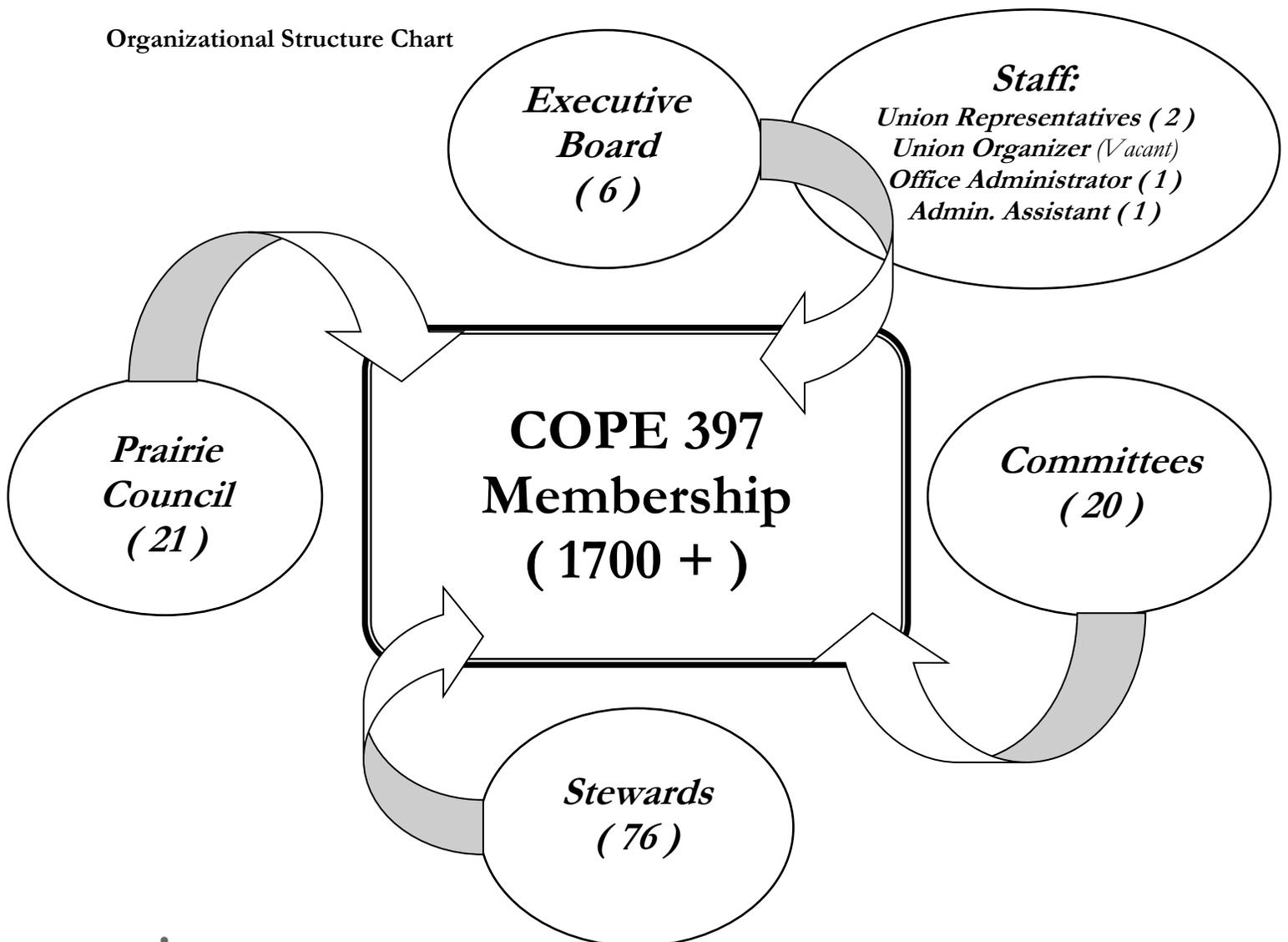
- 7 Bargaining Units with 12 Collective Agreements in the three Prairie Provinces
- 76 Stewards
- 27 Executive and Prairie Council Members
- 20 Committees
- Regular Membership and Bargaining Unit Meetings

### Unions are a Democracy

Our Members run our Union. Our Union Officers are elected by the Members to represent all members of COPE Local 397. The Executive Board is elected for a three-year term. The Prairie Council Members are elected to a two-year term. Stewards are elected from within their work area.

We follow the latest version of Bourinot's Rules of Order

### Organizational Structure Chart



## The Executive Board and the Prairie Council

**The Executive Board** consists of the President, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President, Treasurer, Recording Secretary and a Sergeant-at-Arms. Executive Board Members are elected by a plurality of the voting membership. The Board meets monthly to discuss administrative and operational issues. The Board reports to the Prairie Council on policy and financial matters.

<b>President</b>	• <b>Kim Wilson</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Vice-President</b>	• <b>Jeremy Koskie</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President</b>	• <b>Nathaniel Cole</b>
<b>Treasurer</b>	• <b>Jackie Lazar</b>
<b>Recording Secretary</b>	• <b>Gloria Patrick</b>
<b>Sergeant-at-Arms</b>	• <b>Barry Hutt</b>

**Prairie Council Members** are responsible for setting guidelines for policy and financial matters. The Executive Board, on a day-to-day basis, works within those guidelines. Prairie Council meetings are held at least four times each year.

### PRAIRIE COUNCIL 2017 - 2018

<b>SGI Regina Head Office:</b>	• <b>Ed Bens</b>
	• <b>Don Poitras</b>
	• <b>Nick Stadel</b>
<b>SGI Regina Branches:</b>	• <i>Vacant</i>
	• <b>Darin Milo</b>
<b>SGI Branches:</b>	
Kindersley	• <b>Al Gareau</b>
Meadow Lake/Lloydminster	• <b>Joan Reed</b>
Moose Jaw	• <b>Mike Cook</b>
North Battleford	• <b>Jaime Seminuk</b>
Prince Albert	• <b>Carmen Doyle</b>
Saskatoon	• <b>Ambrosia Varaschin</b>
Saskatoon	• <b>Rhonda Kincade</b>
Swift Current	• <b>Leanne Halbert</b>
Tisdale	• <i>Vacant</i>
Weyburn/Estevan	• <i>Vacant</i>
Yorkton	• <b>Matt Harasymuk</b>
SCISL Winnipeg	• <i>Vacant</i>
<b>NDP Provincial Office</b>	• <b>Stacey Dyck Jirikca</b>
<b>NDP Caucus Office</b>	• <b>Mitchell Bonokoski</b>
<b>NDP Constituency Assistants</b>	• <i>Vacant</i>
<b>RM of Alexander</b>	• <b>Cindy McLean</b>
<b>Calgary Unit</b>	• <b>Lucille Fedkiw</b>
<b>URFA</b>	• <b>Heather Ritenburg</b>

The Prairie Council consists of all the members of the Executive Board together with representatives from the following units:

<b>Saskatchewan Government Insurance</b>	
- Lloydminster/Meadow Lake	1 member
- Saskatoon	2 members
- Prince Albert	1 member
- Swift Current	1 member
- Tisdale	1 member
- Weyburn/Estevan	1 member
- North Battleford	1 member
- Moose Jaw	1 member
- Yorkton	1 member
- Kindersley	1 member
- Winnipeg	1 member
- Regina Head Office	3 members
- All other Regina Locations outside of Head Office	2 member
<b>NDP Provincial Office</b>	1 member
<b>NDP Caucus Office</b>	1 member
<b>NDP Constituency Assistants</b>	1 member
<b>RM of Alexander</b>	1 member
<b>Calgary Unit</b>	1 member
<b>URFA</b>	1 member



COPE Local 397 has several Committees. If you are interested in more information on Committees or would like to participate in some manner please contact the Union office.

**COMMUNICATIONS** ..... Kim Wilson, Jackie Lazar, Stacey Dyck-Jiricka, Nick Stadel, Stephanie Kerr, Ed Bens (*Resource:* Ronda Derby, Cory Szczepanski, Patti Harris)  
*Is responsible for publishing news, information and articles of interest to the Members of COPE Local 397, using various forms of media.*

**SOCIAL** ..... Barry Hutt, Kim Wilson, Jeremy Koskie, Gloria Patrick (*Resource:* Tricia Klassen)  
*Organizes social events for the Local.*

**FINANCE** ..... Jackie Lazar, Kim Wilson, Ambrosia Varaschin, Mitchell Bonokoski  
*(Resource: Patti Harris)*  
*Establishes financial practices and policies for the Local.*

**CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGE** ..... Gloria Patrick, Kim Wilson, Lucille Fedkiw, Nathaniel Cole (*Resource:* Rhonda Derby, Cory Szczepanski, Patti Harris)  
*Reviews the Local's Constitution and recommends any changes needed.*

**STEWARD ACTION/EDUCATION \*** ..... Nathaniel Cole, Kim Wilson, Jeremy Koskie, Bryan MacKenzie, Nathan Schneider, Jackie Lazar (*Resource:* Rhonda Derby, Cory Szczepanski, Patti Harris)  
*Decides what educational and training programs the Local needs and organizes the programs.*

**POLITICAL ACTION/EDUCATION** ..... Gloria Patrick, Kim Wilson, Jackie Lazar, Darin Milo, Stacey Dyck Jiricka, Barry Hutt, Ed Bens (*Resource:* Rhonda Derby, Cory Szczepanski)  
*Participates and assists in all aspects of political activity to protect and advance the objectives of the Members of COPE Local 397.*

**PROMOTIONS** ..... Kim Wilson, Jackie Lazar, Jeremy Koskie, Ambrosia Varaschin (*Resource:* Tricia Klassen)

**POLICY** ..... Jeremy Koskie, Kim Wilson, Jackie Lazar, Lucille Fedkiw, Don Poitras  
*(Resource: Rhonda Derby, Cory Szczepanski, Patti Harris)*  
*Charged with establishing and reviewing policies and guidelines for the Local*

**BALLOTING BOARD** ..... Jennifer Adams, Peggy Farrell, Shelley Brown (*Resource:* Patti Harris, Tricia Klassen)  
*Charged with the duty of overseeing any situation requiring a mail-out ballot*

**ACCOUNTABILITY** ..... Nick Stadel, Lucille Fedkiw, Stacey Dyck Jiricka, Cindy McLean, Joan Reed  
*Charged with addressing Member concerns regarding issues surrounding conduct and attendance*

## **SPECIAL INTEREST / GENERAL COMMITTEES:**

### **WOMEN'S \***

Jackie Lazar, Kim Wilson, Diane Knash Rapp, Gloria Patrick, Chantelle Demkiw, Ambrosia Varaschin, Carmen Doyle (*Resource: Rhonda Derby*)

*Brings issues that affect Women to the attention of the Executive and encourages women to get involved in the affairs of the Local.*

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**ABORIGINAL, VISIBLE MINORITY AND EQUITY \*** Don Poitras, Kim Wilson, Darin Milo, Jeremy Koskie, Donavon Ouellette, Karen Rainbow, Kim Laliberte  
(*Resource: Rhonda Derby, Cory Szczepanski*)

*Brings issues that affect Aboriginal, Visible Minorities and Equity Groups to the attention of the Executive; to work together to resolve the issues and encourages involvement in the affairs of the Local.*

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**YOUNG WORKERS \*** (*under 35*).....Vacant, Tessa Planeto, Conway Samuelson (*Regina*), Krystal Reeves (*Regina*), Jeremy Koskie (*Saskatoon*), Nathan Schneider (*Saskatoon*), Chantelle Demkiw (*Tisdale*), Stephanie Yanoshewski (*Regina*)

*Brings issues that affect young workers to the attention of the Executive; to work together to resolve the issues and encourages involvement in the affairs of the Local.*

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**LGBTQ\* \*** .....Lucille Fedkiw, Kim Wilson, Leigh Golden, Jeremy Koskie, Jessica Boyer, Karen Rainbow, Nathaniel Cole (*Resource: Rhonda Derby, Cory Szczepanski*)

*Brings issues that affect LGBT Members to the attention of the Executive; to work together to resolve the issues and encourages involvement in the affairs of the Local.*

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**OH&S \*** .....Ed Bens, Kim Wilson, Matt Harasymuk, Doug Harmsworth, Nick Stadel, Frank Mentis (*Resource: Rhonda Derby, Cory Szczepanski*)

*Brings Occupational Health and Safety issues that affect Members to the attention of the Executive; to work together to resolve the issues and encourages involvement in the affairs of the Local.*

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## **UNION MEMBERS OF JOINT SGI COMMITTEES:**

**INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS**.....Kim Wilson (Union Co-Chair), Jeremy Koskie, Jackie Lazar, Rhonda Derby, Cory Szczepanski

*The Committee that discusses issues of mutual interest to the Union and the Corporation.*

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**JOB EVALUATION**.....Nick Stadel (Union Co-Chair), Bev Chandler, Maureen Bongie, Ed Bens, Herbie Kallichuk, Peggy Farrell, Jordana Zdunich

*The Committee appointed to maintain the SGI Job Evaluation Plan.*

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**EMPLOYMENT EQUITY** .....Rhonda Derby (Union Co-Chair), Delia Sanchez Garcia

*The Committee that maintains a joint SGI Employment Equity Program as approved by the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission.*

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## **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY (OH&S) / HEALTH & WELLNESS**

..... Cory Szczepanski (Union Co-Chair), Kim Wilson, Jackie Lazar,

*Committee that serves as an avenue of communication and liaison with OH & S Site Committees and provides a forum of discussion and problem solving regarding SGI Health, Safety and Wellness issues with emphasis on issues impacting multiple locations and/or Employees.*

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**TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE**.....Rhonda Derby (Union Co-Chair), Kim Wilson, Jackie Lazar, Cory Szczepanski

*Formulates and recommends personnel policies with regard to problems which may arise as a result of technological change at SGI.*

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*Chairperson – underlined*

**\* New Members Welcome**

## COPE LOCAL 397 AFFILIATIONS

COPE Local 397 is not an island unto itself but a significant part of the overall labour community.

COPE Local 397 is a Local of our National Union. COPE National is comprised over 33,000 members in Canada. Our local represents Members who work at Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI), Saskatchewan NDP Provincial and Caucus Offices, Saskatchewan NDP Constituency Assistants, the RM of Alexander, the U of R Faculty Association (URFA) and our Calgary Unit. We have over 1,700 members in Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Alberta. Our affiliation with our National Union is one of our most important affiliations and recognizes the common interest we have with other office, technical and professional employees.

Our National pays our per capita dues to the CLC – the Canadian Labour Congress, of which we are a member. The CLC is made up of 2.4 Million affiliated members and represents an important national labour voice.

In Saskatchewan, as affiliates of the CLC, we are members of the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour – which represents over 93,500 members from 35 national and international unions, representing approximately 93,500 members. Also provincially, we have members on various Labour Councils.

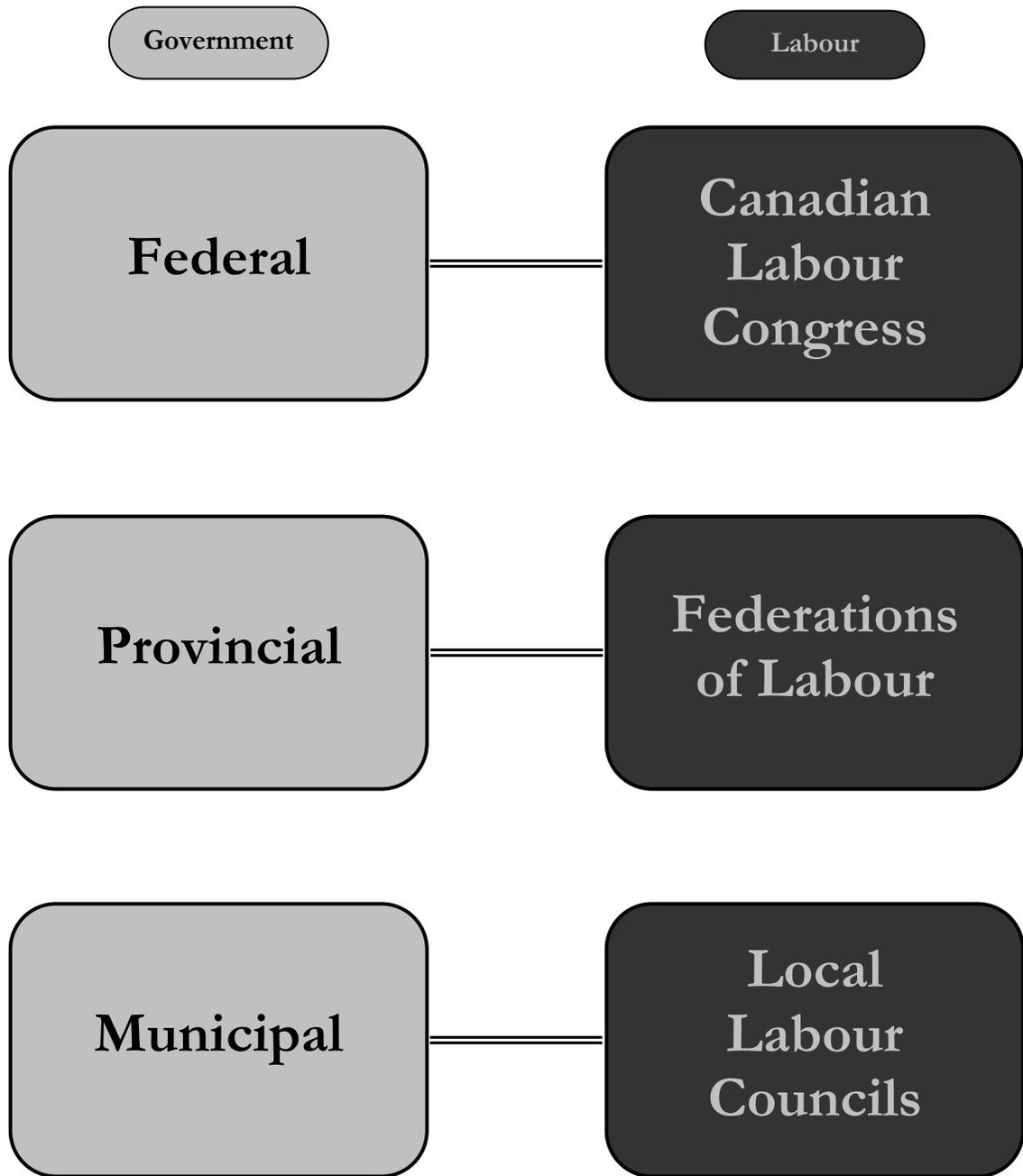
To all these very important organizations a percentage of our dues are paid on a per capita (per number of members basis).

You will notice the structure of the labour movement parallels that of government:

Municipally	-	Local Labour Councils
Provincially	-	Federations of Labour
Federally	-	Canadian Labour Congress

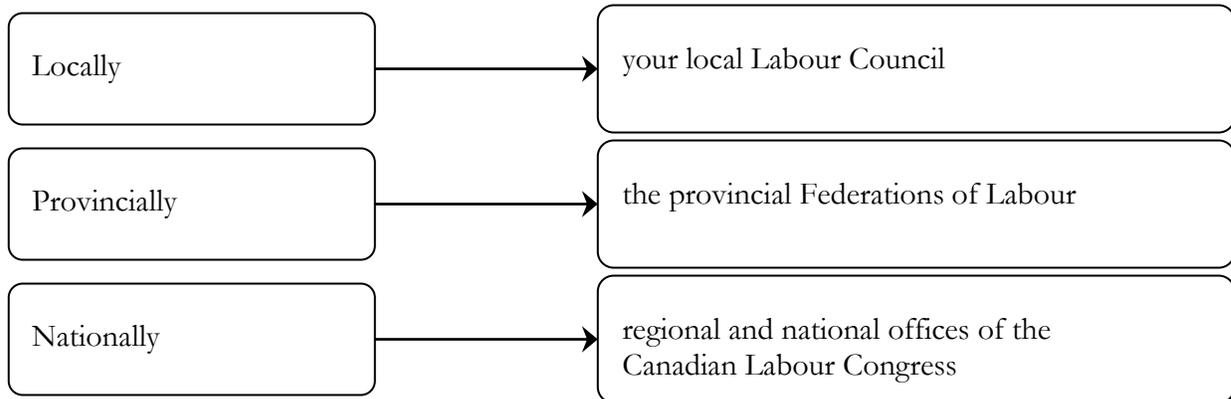
With the Labour Councils, the Federations of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress as a broad structural base, COPE Local 397 is better able to represent the interests of our members, with broader educational opportunities, solidarity and a unified labour presence. Collectively, Unions working together have a stronger voice. In unity, there is strength.

The following, provides more in depth information of the services provided by the various organizations in the Labour movement.



**The Labour Movement is organized on the National, Provincial and Local levels, similar to government structures**

You are part of the wider union movement. This consists of:



### **THE CANADIAN LABOUR CONGRESS:**

The Congress provides a range of services including education courses and deals with matters that affect the labour movement nationally, e.g. relations with the federal government and with the international trade union movement. Prominent issues are manpower, immigration, free trade, the increasing control of the national economy by multi-national corporations and the effects of new technology on employment levels. The CLC convention is held every second year.

### **PROVINCIAL FEDERATIONS OF LABOUR:**

Your local union is affiliated to the provincial federations of labour as well as to the local labour councils. The federations are the provincial arm of the CLC; they provide many services dealing with matters that affect the union movement provincially such as labour legislation on matters like apprenticeship, employment standards, human rights, health and safety at work, and social services legislation. Their annual Convention reflects the concerns of the labour movement in each province; federations also pressurize governments on immediate needs such as plant closures, unemployment, and the effects of adverse provincial legislation.

### **THE LABOUR COUNCILS:**

Your local union is required by the national union to affiliate to the local labour councils, which is the municipal arm of the CLC. As such, it represents the interests of labour and has an effective voice in dealing with municipal Councils, Boards and Commissions. You can contribute to its activities and in turn you will get help with:

- ❖ information on union and employer activities in the area;
- ❖ education classes;
- ❖ the work of the various committees of the Council;
- ❖ strikes or disputes...with your employer (the Labour Council coordinates help, support and financial assistance when called upon by the local).

With the Labour Councils, the Federations of Labour and the Canadian Labour Congress as a broad structural base, COPE Local 397 is better able to represent the interests of our members, with broader educational opportunities, solidarity and a unified labour presence. Collectively, Unions working together have a stronger voice. In unity, there is strength.

## WHAT DO WE EXPECT OF YOU?

- ❖ To attend Union meetings
- ❖ To abide by your Collective Agreement – Your Contract of Employment
  - ❖ Do not make private deals with Management
  - ❖ Do not cross picket lines
  - ❖ To support your fellow Union Members
- ❖ To abide by the COPE Local 397 Constitution & Bylaws
- ❖ To see your Union Representative, Executive Board or Prairie Council Member or Steward if you have questions or concerns or call the Union Office:



#109 – 2709 – 12<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Regina, Saskatchewan  
S4T 1J3

Phone: (306) 352-4240  
Toll Free: 1-877-COPE397 (1-877-267-3397)  
Fax: (306) 347-2720  
E-Mail: [cope397@sasktel.net](mailto:cope397@sasktel.net)

Website: [www.cope397.ca](http://www.cope397.ca)