

The past three years kept PSAC members in the Prairies very busy. With three provincial elections, several municipal elections and a federal election, as well as new courses and conferences, multiple campaigns and ongoing political action and lobbying, there is a lot to be proud of.

Last November marked the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Public Service Alliance of Canada. PSAC was born when the Civil Service Association and the Civil Service Federation merged in 1966. Back in 1966, PSAC used the newfound strength and unity to negotiate its first collective agreements with the federal government. Over the next decades, we won major improvements in working conditions for our members.

Our strength and unity is still what makes us effective in our work to this day. Between mobilizing around bargaining and fighting to keep sick leave, to doubling efforts to unseat the Conservatives and participating in monthly 19th events, our members never shy away from an opportunity to take action and to speak out for workers' rights.

Serving as your Regional Executive Vice-President for the past five years has allowed me to meet with so many incredible labour activists. I am constantly reminded how lucky I am to be surrounded by union sisters and brothers who challenge and inspire me.

I've also been fortunate to participate in some truly life changing opportunities. In 2016 I attended the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York, an intergovernmental body of the UN dedicated to the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of women. Later that year, I participated in a mission to Bangladesh with PSAC's Social Justice Fund to determine the level of progress on health and safety for factory workers. Even though there is much work to be done in Canada, I am even more grateful for the protections and freedoms we enjoy.

It's been an exciting and exhilarating three years for our members, and this report only briefly touches on some of what happened across the region. While it wasn't possible to fit all of the great work our members did into this report, I want to sincerely thank each and every member for doing their part.

Together we've shared some incredible successes, and we've had our share of disappointment too. And, in some cases, the fight is still going on. But the biggest accomplishment from the last three years is the sustained level of engagement from our members.

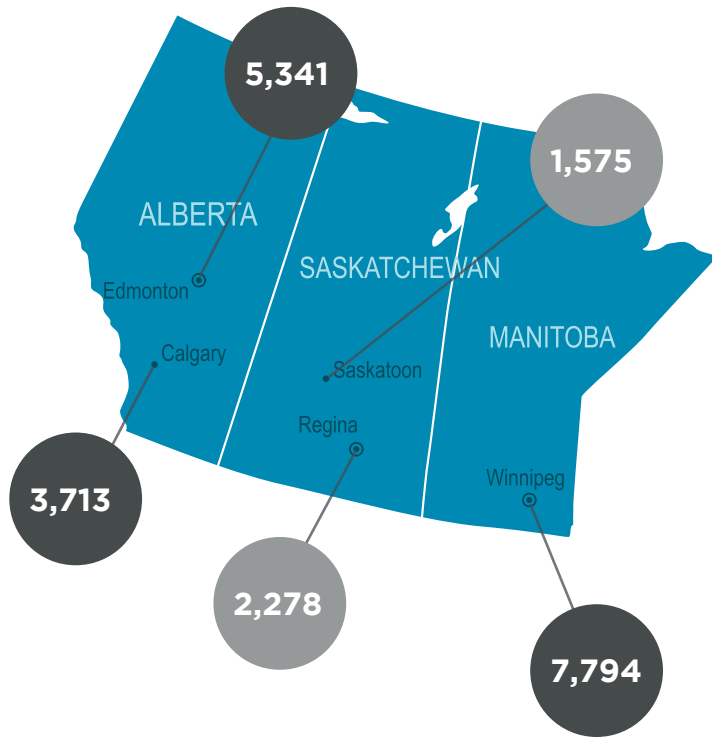
For every member, who volunteered at a community organization on behalf of the union, or marched in a Pride parade, or helped with a local labour day BBQ, or took a PSAC course, or sat on a bargaining team, or rallied in front of a workplace, or lobbied a politician, or signed a union card for the first time, you each make this union strong. We couldn't do any of the great work we do in our communities and in our workplaces without you. Thank you for your continued efforts and dedication to workers rights and social justice.

To read more about the work of our committees and area councils, view the full-colour PDF of this report, or learn about anything else mentioned in this report, I encourage you to visit the PSAC Prairie Region website.

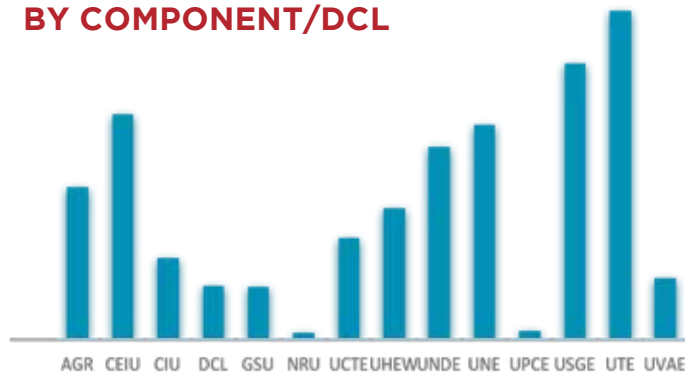
From left: PSAC founding Convention in Ottawa (Nov. 1966); Vote Child Care rally at the Manitoba Legislative Building (May 2015); 19th Day of Action rally in Winnipeg (Mar. 2015); United Nations Commission on the Status of Women in New York (Mar. 2016); Social Justice Fund mission to Bangladesh (Feb. 2016).



PRAIRIES MEMBERSHIP BY REGIONAL OFFICE AREA



PRAIRIES MEMBERSHIP BY COMPONENT/DCL



**These figures do not include recently organized units that are currently negotiating their first collective agreement and not yet collecting dues.*

There are currently 20,701 PSAC members in the Prairie Region that span three provinces, 13 components, 197 locals, and five directly chartered locals. These members are serviced by 20 PSAC staff in five regional offices. The biggest regional office is Winnipeg, with 7,794 members across Manitoba, followed by Edmonton (5,341), Calgary (3,713), Regina (2,278), and Saskatoon (1,575). Meanwhile, the biggest component is UTE with 3,618 members throughout the region, followed by USGE (3,038), CEIU (2,477), UNE (2,359) and UNDE (2,127).

We have collective agreements with 29 different employers, including Treasury Board, which employs 12,618 members throughout the Prairies in 32 different departments. The government departments that employ the largest number of members are Employment and Social Development Canada (2,324), Department of National Defence (2,039), and Correctional Service of Canada (1,530). While most locals saw slight increases or slight decreases in their membership numbers since 2014, the overall number of members is about the same.

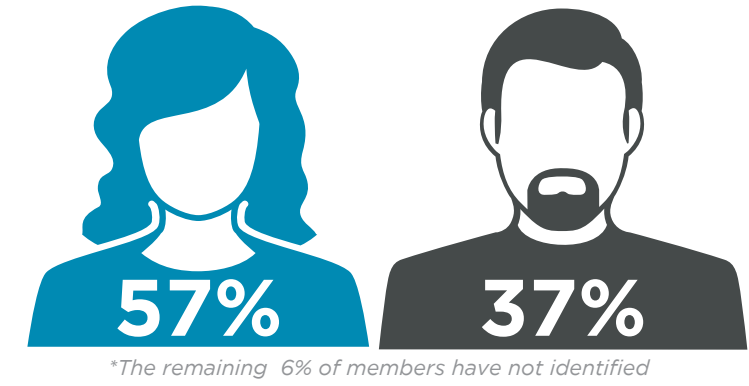
The PSAC Prairie Region presently has five directly chartered locals with approximately 3,000 members and eight collective agreements. There are 17 separate employer locals with approximately 1,600 members and 22 collective agreements. These numbers are expected to increase as we continue to organize.

The regional membership is 57% female and 37% male (6% unknown), with more than 1,200 people holding a union position in their local or component. This includes one national president, two component national presidents, 91 component elected officers, 286 shop stewards and chief stewards, 67 local health and safety reps, and three local young worker reps.

We have 19 different area councils and committees, including eight area councils (Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Prince Albert, Regina, Saskatoon, Westman, Winnipeg), six regional women's committees (Calgary, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Regina, Saskatoon, Winnipeg), four human rights committees (Calgary, Edmonton, Regina, Winnipeg), and one regional aboriginal peoples' circle (Northern Saskatchewan).

PSAC Prairies members also attended various national conferences. The PSAC National Triennial Convention was held April 26 to May 1, 2015 in Québec City, Québec. Of the 520 registered delegates, 77 were from the Prairies. The PSAC National Health and Safety Conference was held November 18 to 20, 2016 in Montréal, Québec with 52 of the 292 registered delegates from the Prairies. The PSAC National Equity Conferences are scheduled to be held March 24 to 28, 2017 in Toronto, Ontario with 510 members expected to attend, including 79 from the Prairies.

PRAIRIES MEMBERSHIP BY GENDER



PRAIRIES MEMBERSHIP BY UNION POSITION



20,701
THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PSAC MEMBERS IN THE PRAIRIE REGION

114
PSAC PRAIRIES COURSES OFFERED SINCE JUNE 2014

1,431
PSAC PRAIRIES COURSE PARTICIPANTS SINCE JUNE 2014

**This number doesn't include courses offered through JLP or components.*

THE PRAIRIE REGION HAD THE THIRD HIGHEST PARTICIPATION RATE OF ALL PSAC REGIONS, WITH 6% OF OUR MEMBERS TAKING PSAC COURSES SINCE JUNE 2014.

THIRD PLACE



 **WEBSITE**

The PSAC Prairies website continues to grow as a top source of information for members. Website traffic in 2016 increased by 10% since 2014 with 47,146 website sessions, 29,656 web users (up 19%), and 151,080 web page views (up 12%).

In the first three months of 2017, we've already seen a 64% increase in page views from the same period the year before. The spike in traffic is likely due to members seeking information about ratification votes, as the top page for 2017 is "Ratification votes for members in the TC, PA, SV and EB bargaining units." The top page for 2016 was "CRA Ratification Vote Meeting Dates & Locations," which suggests members rely on the website when they're looking for important union information.

The use of Windows computers has decreased by 11% since 2014 among website users. The use of Android devices has increased by 8% over the same period and the use of Blackberry devices has

decreased by 4%. Apple remains the number one device among website users, with 62% of all mobile visitors using an iPhone or iPad to access the website.

The member information dashboard on the PSAC national website also received some improvements. Members can now log in to the website to get news about their employer, their collective agreement, and contact information for their region, component or local. Members are still able to update their contact information, but the new dashboard page now delivers much more information.

 **E-NEWSLETTER**

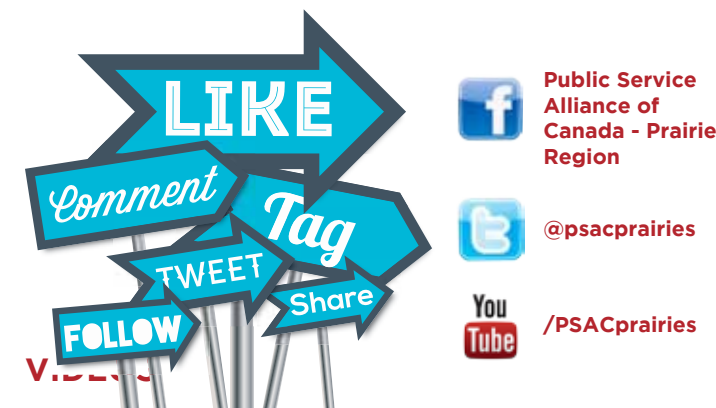
The Prairies e-newsletter is another effective method for reaching our members. Last year, the open rate for the e-newsletter averaged 44.4%, double the industry average of 22.1%. Meanwhile, the average click rate was 6.3%, almost triple the industry average of 2.6%. In 2015, the open rate was 37.6% and the click rate was almost identical at 6.45%.


Despite e-mail being the preferred form of contact for many members, we only have home e-mails for 38% of our regional membership. On the other hand, we have home mailing addresses for 90% of our members in the Prairies and home telephone numbers for 80%.

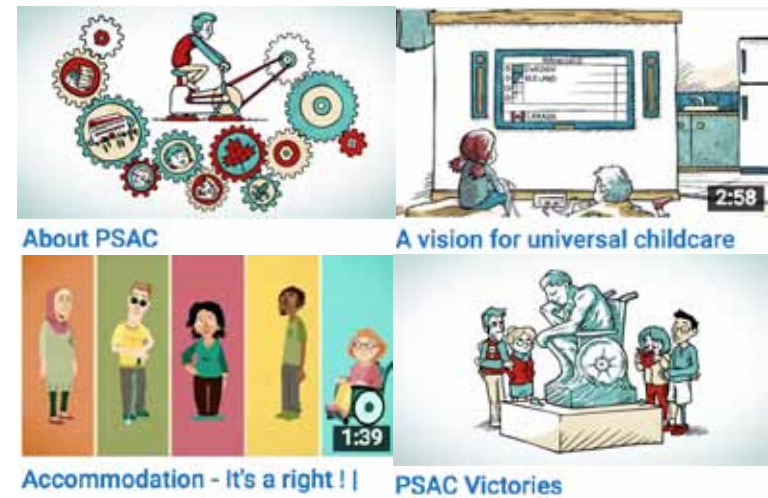
 **SOCIAL MEDIA**


Over the past three years, we have increased our Facebook following marginally year-over-year. We now have nearly triple the Facebook "likes" as we did at the 2014 Prairie Region Triennial Convention. However, we are still one of the lowest among other PSAC regions. We are currently investing resources into growing that following through targeted ads and promoted posts, with a goal to reach 5,000 Facebook "likes" by the end of 2017.

We currently have a bigger audience on Twitter and we continue to get great engagement from our tweets. In 2016, we had 223,912 impressions, 883 retweets and 691 likes. We also had 707 clicks on the URL links contained in our tweets, and 663 clicks on the hashtags. Two of the top three most viewed tweets were related to the #SupportOurPort campaign. Already in the first three months of 2017, we have 29,504 impressions, 96 retweets, 107 likes, and 133 URL clicks. The top three most viewed tweets are all related to political action and labour legislation.



 Since the last PSAC Prairie Region Triennial Convention, PSAC National has released more than 20 online videos, in both official languages, which have collectively garnered over 2.5 million views on YouTube. The Vote to Stop the Cuts video alone has nearly 1.7 million views. Other topics included "Standing together for bargaining, standing together for public services," "A vision for universal childcare," "PSAC Victories," "Accommodation - It's a right!" and more.



 **WEBINARS**

In 2015, we held monthly, interactive webinars for members to learn about critical issues and get important updates. The webinars were also an opportunity for members to ask questions and give feedback. The topics included bargaining basics, retirement security, childcare, political action, labour history and health and safety. All webinars were posted to the PSAC Prairies YouTube channel following the event. Participation varied depending on topic, but feedback was always positive. Members were grateful for an opportunity to learn and engage with their union from the comfort of their homes.



VOTE TO STOP THE CUTS

With a unanimous mandate from our 2015 National Triennial Convention, PSAC launched the Vote to Stop the Cuts public awareness campaign on July 13, 2015. The message: stop the cuts to public services by voting out the Conservatives.

After its launch, #VoteToStopTheCuts went viral. The two campaign videos received 5.3 million views on YouTube and Facebook; Over 370,000 people visited VoteToStopTheCuts.ca; Campaign content got 1.3 million Tweets, Facebook likes and shares; Canadians sent 5,339 letters to candidates; and PSAC's Facebook following grew from 9,000 followers, to 28,000 (now nearly 32,000), making us one of the most influential Canadian unions on social media.

An Ekos poll, taken right before the election suggested eight out of ten respondents believed that cuts to public services would influence the way they voted. The campaign

owes its success to PSAC members who spread the message, through face-to-face conversations, by wearing a campaign button, sharing campaign messages on social media and sending letters to candidates.

Members also did their part to ensure the issue was visible inside and outside their workplaces, with monthly actions on the 19th as a reminder of the upcoming federal election and the cuts to public services, as well as a show of solidarity with bargaining teams. After officially launching this initiative in the Prairies on November 19, 2014, it quickly grew, with more locals joining the movement and participating in actions each month. Some actions were photo ops with members holding "standing together for public services/standing together for fairness" signs or information pickets. The events and actions were popular and got members mobilized who aren't typically involved in union activities.



SICK LEAVE

Prior to PSAC reaching tentative agreements with Treasury Board, which covers over 73,000 members in the TC, SV, PA and EB bargaining units, we fought a nearly three-year battle against the very real threat of losing sick leave. In the 2014 federal budget, the Conservative government announced that it planned to eliminate the existing sick leave provisions for federal public service workers, whether or not an agreement was reached at the bargaining table.

PSAC members immediately took action, writing letters to their MPs and their local newspapers and sharing their stories with the union. We hosted a telephone town hall with nearly 4,000 members throughout Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba to discuss important information about the attack on sick leave.

Multi-local meetings were held to discuss our plan. The meetings were a huge success, with hundreds of members attending to hear updates from leadership and bargaining team members. We also held two webinars for those who had prior engagements and for members in rural areas who weren't able to attend in person.

PSAC launched an online petition asking people to take the pledge to support paid sick leave for federal government workers, and for all workers across Canada. Over 33,000 people took the pledge.

After Justin Trudeau defeated Stephen Harper in the federal election, we were hopeful for a more cooperative bargaining process. But we were quickly disheartened to find the Liberals maintaining Harper's position at the bargaining table. In response, we launched a series of radio and print ads appealing directly to Trudeau to #MakeGoodOnYourWord and support public service workers.

In the end, our efforts paid off and the government backed down from their position on sick leave. While we still have several bargaining units without an agreement, including FBs, Parks and CFIA, I am confident they will maintain their sick leave, as well. I'd like to thank all of our bargaining team members for their dedication to securing a fair collective agreement, and to all of the PSAC members who took action to protect sick leave.



SUPPORT OUR PORT

On July 25, 2016, OmniTrax Canada advised UCTE members working at the Port of Churchill in Churchill, Manitoba, that they were cancelling the grain shipping season and workers currently on staff would be laid off effective August 8. Workers not yet called in for the season were notified they would not be called back. Our members make up roughly 10% of the town's population.

In response, PSAC and UCTE launched a campaign to #SupportOurPort, including window signs and buttons, which gained national attention in the House of Commons and the media. We also joined with the local community to create a Facebook group called "Support Our Port."

In December, employees of the Port of Churchill visited Parliament Hill to call on Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Minister of Transport Marc Garneau to save the port by converting the Port of Churchill into a Port Authority under federal jurisdiction.

The group posed for a photo that read, "No Christmas for Churchill – Save Our Port." They also met with several MPs and staff from all parties and attended Question Period.

Immediately following our action on The Hill, we received a call from Minister of Natural Resources Jim Carr to discuss the issue, hear our concerns, and provide us with updates. After repeated e-mails and phone messages went ignored, and with little-to-no action from the government, I am certain that our very public efforts forced them to finally respond. I am very proud of the workers for sharing their stories and standing up to the employer.

The Liberals say they're looking at a long-term strategy, but haven't made any commitments. However, this is only the first step in the process of securing this community's future. We still believe that making the Port of Churchill a port authority would help strengthen the long-term economic prospect of Churchill itself.



"Canadian Families living in rural Alberta deserve to have access to Federal jobs."
—Local Processing Centre Employees

Respect Vegreville

STOP CLOSURE OF VEGREVILLE CASE PROCESSING CENTRE
RESPECTVEGREVILLE.CA

"I have seen, first hand, the devastation that just the announcement of the closure has already done to our community."
—Local Restaurant Manager



RESPECT VEGREVILLE

On October 27, 2016, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada employees at the Vegreville Case Processing Centre were shocked to learn that the federal government plans to close their processing centre in Vegreville, Alberta and relocate it to Edmonton by the end of 2018. Approximately 280 employees work in the centre, processing temporary and permanent residency applications, work permits and student permits. The employees represent approximately 5% of the population of Vegreville, a community approximately 100 km outside of Edmonton.

The closure of the Case Processing Centre will have a devastating impact on the entire

Vegreville community, and PSAC/CEIU are doing everything we can to stop it. We convened a steering committee consisting of local representatives and union leaders to help guide our planning and to ensure we are strategic and effective in our efforts. We also launched an online action so PSAC members and Canadians can show their support.

We held a community forum on December 18, which more than 400 people attended to show their support, voice their concerns, and call for the government to #RespectVegreville. We have since sent multiple letters to the Minister of Immigration and the Prime Minister, as well as every Liberal MP and the National Rural Caucus, asking for their support to reverse the decision.

FIX PHOENIX PAY SYSTEM !

FIX PHOENIX

One year after its launch, the Phoenix pay system is still not working. Thousands of public service workers have been paid incorrectly or not at all. Many more worry every pay day if they will be the next victim of the Phoenix debacle. It is also putting excessive stress on the employees who process pay under the new system.

PSAC members have been underpaid, not paid at all, or had to wait months for their paycheques. In one of the worst cases, a member faced foreclosure on her house and additional legal fees.

Minister Judy Foote has admitted that 700 compensation advisors should not have been laid off before the Phoenix launch, saying savings were sought at the expense of employees. She also acknowledged that many good ideas on how to fix Phoenix have come from union members.

The government has confirmed that it is two months—or 200,000 cases—behind in processing “pay transactions” under the

new Phoenix pay system. They also have no date for when the system will be fixed. On February 23, 2017, PSAC, the Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC), and the Canadian Association of Professional Employees (CAPE) called on the government to include a \$75 million Phoenix contingency fund in the upcoming federal budget. The fund would give departments and agencies the resources they need for the staff and training to deal with Phoenix.

However, the federal government’s budget, delivered on March 22, failed to address the problem. By not including the contingency fund, the government is going to prolong and worsen the problems with the pay system. It also sends the message that fixing Phoenix is not a priority for this government.

I want to thank all the members who have been active on this issue, both online and in their workplaces. The national website has a dedicated section to #FixPhoenix with regular updates to continue to follow this issue as it develops.



NO MORE FAIRY TALES

Members of our regional women’s committees in Alberta worked together to come up with a regional campaign to encourage MPs and MLAs in the Prairies to take action on the issue of child care and work together to create a national child care program. The slogan is, “No more fairy tales. It’s time to make universal child care a reality.” The campaign launched on December 22, 2016 with a holiday-themed online postcard and three more online postcards were developed to be released monthly.

The idea stemmed from conversations at the 2016 Prairies Regional Women’s Conference. Through a series of conference calls and emails that followed, the committees developed the No More Fairy Tales campaign with an online action.

PSAC National also released their own online action calling on governments to create a universal child care system. The Liberal government’s second budget answered PSAC’s call for a long-term federal commitment to early childhood education and child care, but the amount allocated is not enough to ensure a universal, affordable system across Canada. Affordable, high quality child care is critical for women’s economic security, for children and families, and it is good for the economy.

There is still much work to do to make child care a reality for all who need it and our Prairies Regional Women’s Committees are committed to pushing the issue in their communities. This is only the beginning of our efforts, as members identified this was a priority for our union when they passed a resolution at the 2015 National Triennial Convention, which calls on PSAC to continue work with affiliates, allies and child care advocates and to dedicate \$10,000 per year for each region to promote the campaign in their workplace and community.



UPDATE: It has been several years since we launched our Don’t Sell Our Hot Springs campaign with UNE. On September 2, 2016 the Minister responsible for Parks Canada announced that the Agency would no longer

pursue the privatization of the Canadian Rockies Hot Springs. This is a true victory for all the members within our Parks locals that took action. Thank you for your hard work and commitment, and congratulations!





FEDERAL ELECTION

Area Councils and Committees in the Prairie Region spent months leading up to the October 19, 2015 federal election day reaching out to members to discuss election issues and encourage members to vote in advance polls.

Area Councils spearheaded candidates' forums in five targeted ridings in the Prairies. We sponsored, organized and moderated all of the forums, but they were open to the public and questions came from the floor. The events were well-received by members and the public. In some cases, they were the only forums planned for those ridings.

Dozens of members organized mail-outs from each regional office to Prairies members in the area. The mail out included a newsletter with information about various activities and ways to get involved, as well as a letter addressed to members in specific ridings. The newsletter was one way to promote the telephone town hall about the election and a webinar about writing a letter to the editor.

Members also participated in phone banks, calling members in certain ridings to discuss the election, important issues and ensure they vote. Feedback from members on these calls was overwhelmingly positive and appreciative. It was also a great way to get members involved that haven't been involved in the past.

All of this was in addition to the monthly activities locals participated in to mark the 19th and ensure public visibility and workplace discussion about the election and bargaining. After months of work, we successfully defeated the federal Conservative government and #StoppedHarper.

With the newly elected Liberal government, we saw an opportunity to reverse the damage caused by the cuts and sponsored a Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives study titled *Reversing the Damage: How the Federal Liberals Can Restore Hope on the Prairies*. The report, released on February 24, 2016, helps assess the damage, including services to veterans, to those seeking information about Employment

Insurance, CPP or income taxes, and to the thousands who visit our National Parks, and charts a way forward with recommendations.

I want to thank all members who actively participated by stepping up to ensure we saw change in Ottawa. Members who volunteered for phone banks, stuffed envelopes, organized and attended candidate forums and took to the streets to flyer drop or door knock for progressive candidates need to be acknowledged. We would not have seen change without those efforts.

ALBERTA PROVINCIAL ELECTION

Alberta's NDP won the May 5, 2015 provincial election by a landslide, sweeping to power with a majority mandate. The NDP gained 49 seats for a total of 53 of 87 seats.

We were proud to see Maria Fitzpatrick (USGE member) elected NDP MLA in Lethbridge East and Oneil Carlier (former Agriculture member & PSAC Edmonton Regional Rep) elected NDP MLA in Whitecourt-Ste Anne. It was a truly inspiring night for PSAC members and Albertans.

On May 10, 2016 and March 28, 2017, I had the pleasure of joining a Labour Liaison meeting in Edmonton with Premier Rachel Notley and members of her cabinet. The provincial government is working closely with the Alberta Federation of Labour and both sides are committed to quarterly labour liaison meetings.

SASKATCHEWAN PROVINCIAL ELECTION

In preparation for the April 4, 2016 election, we did a mail out to all members in Saskatchewan and held a telephone town hall. We worked with the SFL on their election campaign, which focused on how the Saskatchewan Party wasn't listening on key issues.

Unfortunately, Brad Wall was re-elected and the Sask Party remains in power. This means that Crown corporations remain at risk of privatization—despite a campaign promise that stated otherwise—and labour rights continue to be stomped on.

We have been working with the SFL to build effective opposition. They have launched phase two of their OwnIt! Campaign, which aims to expose and amplify the very real risks posed by the Sask Party's privatization agenda.

MANITOBA PROVINCIAL ELECTION

Meanwhile, the April 19, 2016 election of Brian Pallister's PC government in Manitoba is equally troubling, as Pallister has already publicly embarked on a campaign to slash spending and open the door to privatization.

During the provincial election campaign, we worked closely with the Manitoba Federation of Labour, focusing on key policy areas identified by the MFL. We hosted a telephone town hall and circulated a newsletter to our Manitoba members with information about the election and encouraging them to vote.





WE MUST CONTINUE TO KEEP A WATCHFUL EYE ON ALL LEVELS OF OUR GOVERNMENTS TO ENSURE LABOUR LAWS ARE RESPECTED, HEALTH AND SAFETY IS PRESERVED, AND ALL CANADIANS ARE VALUED.

FEDERAL

In January 2015, the Supreme Court of Canada released a ground-breaking decision that enshrines the right to strike as a constitutionally protected right. PSAC was one of several unions, civil liberties and business groups that intervened in this case. PSAC and other unions argued that the essential services law limited workers' rights to strike and ability to negotiate. The Court agreed with unions that the right to strike is necessary to allow workers to join together effectively to advance their workplace rights.

Earlier the same month, the Supreme Court of Canada released another important decision that reinforces workers' rights to freedom of association and collective bargaining with their employer. PSAC was an intervener in the case and supported the appellants in their constitutional challenge. The Supreme Court found that the federal labour laws, which prevent RCMP members from joining a union of their choice and engaging in collective bargaining, violate the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. This decision is a major victory for all workers in their right to unionize freely and independently.

It's important to note that we have seen some concessions from the federal Liberal government, like repealing C-377 and C-525, two bills that were designed to weaken unions with unreasonable financial reporting and to make it more difficult to join a union. While we're pleased with this progress, we have concerns over other legislation this government is moving ahead with, including Bill C-27. In response, PSAC joined the CLC's lobbying efforts of Liberal MPs and Ministers regarding Bill C-27. This bill changes the *Pension Benefits Standards Act* to allow for target benefit plans and is an attack on retirement security.

PROVINCIAL

On October 28, 2016, the Saskatchewan government introduced Bill 40, which changes the definition of privatization regarding Crown corporations. We are very concerned for the more than 300 PSAC members working at Casino Regina (Saskatchewan Gaming Corp.) and have been meeting with other unions and the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour to participate in campaigns to oppose privatization of Saskatchewan Crowns.



make it harder for everyday Manitobans to join a union, and open the door to greater intimidation, bullying and harassment by employers. At its core, Bill 7 is not about protecting workers' democratic rights. Rather, it is directly aimed at expanding the ability of employers to interfere in the process. This legislation's purpose is to make it more difficult for workers to exercise their legal right to unionize and depress the rate of unionization in Manitoba.

On December 9, I attended a press conference at the Manitoba Legislature with MP Niki Ashton, MLA Rob Altemeyer and representatives from Manitoba fishers regarding the provincial government's decision to pull out of the Freshwater Fish Marketing Corp. PSAC/UHEW represents the engineers at the FFMC processing centre in Winnipeg and there is concern regarding the viability of the plant should Manitoba fishers no longer use the facility.

On March 20, 2017, Brian Pallister's

On November 1, 2016, I presented to the Manitoba government's Standing Committee on Social and Economic Development to submit PSAC's position on Bill 7: *The Labour Relations Amendment Act*. The bill would ban card check,

government introduced two bills that attack workers and their fundamental labour rights. The legislation calls for wide-reaching restrictions on bargaining and collective agreements and provides broad powers for the government that would normally be reserved for the Manitoba Labour Board. *The Health Sector Bargaining Unit Review Act* provides for the creation of seven bargaining units for each health region. This will force unions to re-organize their own members and is a blatant attempt to pit unions against one another.

The Public Services Sustainability Act mandates a two-year wage freeze, followed by maximum annual increases of 0.75% and 1.0% in years three and four. This applies to all employees employed in or by: the provincial government; a health organization—including Deer Lodge Centre where over 500 PSAC members work; post-secondary institutions—including the University of Winnipeg and Brandon University where hundreds of PSAC members are employed as academic capacity workers; and several other agencies, authorities and organizations. Instead of allowing savings and efficiencies to be found at the bargaining table, this government is mandating that it has to be on wages.

LOBBYING TIPS:

1. Establish your agenda and goals.
2. Listen well.
3. Be prepared, but don't feel that you need to be an expert.
4. Don't stay too long.
5. Remember you are there to build a relationship.
6. Follow-up is important.



CONFERENCES

In September 2014, nearly 40 young workers attended the **Prairies Young Workers' Conference**, which was an important networking and educational opportunity for young members. During the two days, participants spent time learning more about their union, getting to know other members and sharing workplace experiences.



Meanwhile, 22 members from various separate employer locals and directly chartered locals gathered for the concurrent **Separate Employers Conference**. The gathering was the first of its kind in almost six years. Conference objectives included learning about the PSAC structure, how to deal with management, grievance-handling techniques and to develop leaders to lead others in the locals.



PSAC was proud to be a sponsor of the **ChildCare2020 National Conference**, the first national childcare policy conference in a decade, held in Winnipeg, November 13-15, 2014. The conference brought together parents, early childhood educators, union activists, researchers and politicians to envision what childcare could look like in 2020 if governments really cared. We brought a strong delegation of PSAC sisters from across the country together for the event, re-confirming our union's commitment to affordable and accessible childcare.



The PSAC Prairie Region also hosted the first **Waskawetohta (Taking Action) Conference** for First Nation, Inuit and Métis activists from April 22-24, 2016 in Winnipeg, which was an immense success. We welcomed 25 members to the conference to develop an action plan for Aboriginal issues in the Prairie Region between 2016 and 2018.



The **Prairies Regional Women's Conference** was held June 11-12, 2016 in Winnipeg with over 60 sisters in attendance. Our main objective was to have conference participants reach out and involve other members to build our regional women's committees and mobilize to contribute collectively to social change. There was also a focus on building strong women's committees and on domestic violence in the workplace.



A resolution passed at the 2015 PSAC National Triennial Convention to establish Regional Racially Visible Conferences for the 2016–2018 budget cycle. The inaugural **Prairies Racially Visible Conference** was held September 9–11, 2016 in Winnipeg with 41 members in attendance. The goal was to discuss, strategize and mobilize on issues impacting racially visible members in the region and to create a network of racially visible members in the Prairies.



The **PSAC's Union Development Program** (UDP) has been one of the most comprehensive union leadership training programs in Canada for more than 35 years. The New UDP provides an advanced learning opportunity for emerging leaders to develop the necessary analysis and skills to identify and support union priorities, and to expand our pool of skilled activists who can inspire others. Fourteen members have gone through the New UDP since it re-launched in January 2015 and seven members are currently enrolled for the 2017 session



Over 20 Prairies members participated in the popular **Unionism on Turtle Island course** December 12–16, 2015 in Edmonton. This course was offered to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal members as a means of sharing stories and perspectives. Participants explored important topics such as the history of oppression and resistance, Aboriginal issues in bargaining, creating a representative workforce and opening the union to Aboriginal activists.

Toward the end of 2014, regional offices throughout the Prairies held **Activist Schools** for PSAC members who are active in their union, eager to build workplace power and interested in doing political and social activism work. Dozens of activists participated in the training aimed at providing the tools and skills needed to support political and social activism, as well as prepare them to have meaningful and motivational conversations with co-workers.



SOUTHERN ALBERTA



In February 2015, members from the Calgary Area Council, RWC and HRC worked together with members from the Lethbridge Area Council and RWC to come up with the perfect way to let Stephen Harper know exactly how they feel. They developed a **special Valentine's Day card** that read, "Dear Steve: Roses are red, violets are blue. We want a new Prime Minister, and it isn't you!" The message was shared on social media.

For the first time, PSAC participated in **Fiestaval Latin Festival** at Calgary Olympic Plaza in July 2015. The Calgary Area Council, RWC and HRC worked together to promote PSAC's Vote to Stop the Cuts campaign and hand out information and other materials. Many people who visited the tent expressed discontent with the government and were surprised by the extent of the cuts.

The three Calgary committees also decided that, since it's difficult to get members to come to the committees, the committees would go to the members. In September 2016 they rented an ice cream truck and set up outside the Harry Hays Building over lunch. Committee members handed out ice cream with PSAC 50th anniversary buttons and talked to members about the work the committees do and how they could get involved. Nearly 300 people came through the tent in three hours, making it one of the most successful committee events in 2016. Several of the members who attended ended up joining committees after the event.



Each year, the Lethbridge Area Council & RWC donate thousands of pounds of fresh vegetables to the Interfaith Food Bank Society of Lethbridge through their community garden. In 2016, committee members continued their work and support of community garden and food bank projects, including the tomato project, a young chef program and completing major irrigation on the raised beds of the community garden.

The Lethbridge RWC hosted an annual knitting event on December 5, 2016 where local knitters and crocheters made toques and scarves to donate to local organizations. The knitwear was donated to Lethbridge Family Services and the Alzheimer Society of Alberta.

NORTHERN ALBERTA

The Edmonton RWC held a toque and socks drive over the 2015 holiday season. Committee members donated hundreds of toques, socks and toiletries to Mustard Seed to be delivered to the homeless during the holidays. They also have their own ongoing Garden Project. In the past, committee members have worked with community schools. This year, they're working with the Seniors Association of Edmonton and their goal is to grow a garden that will feed single senior women who live below the poverty level.

The Edmonton Area Council hosted a solidarity brunch on October 1, 2016 with 35 members in attendance from 22 locals. Speakers at the event included, Gil McGowan (President, Alberta Federation of Labour President), Bruce Fafard (President, Edmonton and District Labour Council), Oneil Carlier (Alberta NDP MLA and former PSAC Regional Representative), and myself.



SOUTHERN SASKATCHEWAN

On December 11, 2016 the Regina RWC hosted a women's self-defense workshop with three self-defense instructors and dozens of participants. The RWC also volunteered with members of the Regina Area Council at the Unions of Regina Christmas Dinner on December 20. The event, which was hosted by the Regina & District Labour Council, fed 1,800 people and provided gifts to children in need.



Last year, over 100 people participated in **the annual Regina RWC walk** through Wascana Park on Mother's Day to commemorate the ongoing tragedy of missing and murdered Indigenous women. Many who walked were directly affected by Indigenous women who have gone missing, or knew someone who was affected.



In December 2016, the Regina Human Rights Committee held a Mental Health Seminar with a presentation on mental health and resources available, as well as a workshop on work/life balance. The seminar was held in honour of the Day of Persons with Disabilities (December 3) and was very well received by those who attended.

NORTHERN SASKATCHEWAN

In Saskatoon, the RWC worked on their own annual community garden initiative and worked with the Summer Snack Program. The maintenance and care of garden plots yields large amounts of vegetables for the community throughout the summer.

The Saskatoon Area Council was actively engaged in the Saskatchewan provincial election, holding a "meet and greet the provincial candidates" pancake breakfast in Saskatoon. One of the two PSAC members running as NDP candidates was from Saskatoon and members supported his campaign.

The Prince Albert Area Council worked hard with the Regional Aboriginal People's Circle to inform and bring out the vote for the provincial election. They held a pancake breakfast with a panel of provincial candidates where participants asked questions with a clear focus on Aboriginal issues. The Prince Albert Area Council also organized a town hall forum around bargaining and Phoenix. The event was well-attended and well-received by members.

RAPC members coordinated and facilitated several conference calls in 2016 with community activists from Idle No More, Manitoba Grand Council, Council of Canadians, NAPC and the Prairie Region Council to discuss the impact of the oil spill on First Nations communities along the North Saskatchewan River.

MANITOBA



On July 9, 2016 members of the Winnipeg Human Rights Committee travelled to Steinbach (about an hour to the east of Winnipeg) to participate in **the first-ever Steinbach Pride**. While federal Conservative MP Ted Falk, among others, declined to participate in this historic march, over 3,000 other people attended to show their support, including myself and PSAC National President Robyn Benson.

The Winnipeg Area Council, with assistance from the RWC and HRC, created a float for **the annual Santa Claus Parade**. This was the first time the committees participated in the parade and it was well-received by the community and the members who volunteered to do face painting and walk in the parade with the PSAC float handing out candy. Many people called out from the crowd that they were a PSAC member and showed their support for the union.

For the fifth year, the Westman Area Council participated in the 21st Annual Christmas Tree Auction by decorating one of twelve Christmas trees to donate to local families. The 2016 event raised \$38,505 for the United Way of Brandon & District.





On behalf of our National President, I participated in a mission to Bangladesh with PSAC's Social Justice Fund, February 1-12, 2016. Members of PSAC, CUPE, USW and UNIFOR met with union leaders and the victims and family members of victims from the 2012 Dhaka fire in the Tazreen Fashion factory and the 2013 Rana Plaza collapse, which collectively killed 1,246 people and injured another 2,700.

The objective of the tour was to determine the level of progress on health and safety for factory workers, so we also met with representatives at the International Labour Organization and the Accord. This was followed by a meeting with Bangladesh government officials responsible for health and safety of workers and the Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association.



SJF COMMUNITY SUPPORT

The Calgary RWC participated in the Scotiabank Calgary Marathon on June 1, 2014 to raise money for the Women's Centre of Calgary's "Basic Needs" program. Members raised \$2,500 in donations, which was matched by the PSAC Social Justice Fund for a

final donation of \$5,000. The SJF has continued to provide yearly support to the Women's Centre since the Southern Alberta floods in 2013.

In Saskatoon, the Core Neighbourhood Youth Co-op (CNYC) is an alternative education program helping youth to develop literacy and vital job skills. Supported by the SJF's Literacy Fund and other partners, the CNYC is providing a supportive, alternative learning environment for youth who are not succeeding in the regular school system. Support for the CNYC began with the Agriculture Component, that brought the program to the attention of the SJF. The PSAC Prairie Region visits the program every semester to identify any new needs or concerns related to the program. Through its Community Credit Class program, the CNYC helps youth who have grown up in poverty and abuse to complete their high school education as well as learning skills they can use towards gaining employment.

The Winnipeg Area Council launched a new partnership with Ndinawe, an integrated service organization for youth, focusing on shelter, education, outreach and support. With



funding from PSAC's Social Justice Fund, the Area Council was able to purchase small appliances and equipment for use in their kitchen, as well as food to start a meal program.

The Winnipeg Regional Women's Committee donated \$2,000 to the West Central Women's Community Centre, which offers upwards of 600 meals a week to families in need. The Centre also offers programs that help clients utilize the food in their Winnipeg Harvest basket and programs that deal with proper nutrition.

We were on the ground at emergency centres providing direct support for victims of the 2016 Fort McMurray wildfire, which destroyed approximately 2,400 homes and buildings. Locals and components donated thousands of dollars in relief funds. This level of care and solidarity is what we are all about in the labour movement. We also have to recognize the work that firefighters, emergency care workers and frontline workers did around the clock. The PSAC Prairie Region donated \$5,000 to Red Cross relief efforts and appealed to components, locals and members to give generously.

During harsh times, when families lose homes and jobs, the level of domestic violence often rises to the surface. In response, the Social Justice Fund donated nearly \$12,000 to the Waypoints Community Services to provide temporary shelter for women and children seeking shelter and the most vulnerable members of the community. Another donation was made to help Filipino migrant labour access community services after fleeing the wildfires. I am proud to say that everyone stepped up in a big way.





EDUCATION IN ACTION

Each year since 2007, PSAC members volunteer and travel to Guatemala to participate in the Education in Action (EIA) project. The EIA volunteers meet with Human Rights defenders, women’s groups, and communities defending their rights. Education in Action is one of our most successful worker education programs.

Two young workers from the Prairies, Sisters Kara Bye (USGE, SK) and Mackenzie Campbell (CEIU, MB), participated in the March 2017 Education in Action delegation to Guatemala. From 2014–2016 three young workers also participated, including Sisters Krysty Munns (AGR, AB), Stephanie Vandewaeter (CIU, AB), and Jennifer Botincan (UNDE, MB), along with Brother Ken Friesen (USGE, MB).

EIA volunteers work in solidarity with the Comité Campesino del Altiplano (CCDA), a farmer’s coalition working for labour rights and long-term social change in Guatemala. The objective of this project is to work hand in hand with families in the rebuilding of their communities. The CCDA has been defending the economic, social and cultural rights of the Mayan people since 1982, struggling for equitable land distribution, carrying out sustainable agricultural development, and encouraging the economic empowerment of women.

The volunteers have also helped to build homes for impoverished families, schools, and community centres, a medical centre, and a kitchen.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON
PSAC’S SOCIAL JUSTICE FUND AND
EDUCATION IN ACTION, VISIT
PSAC-SJF.ORG

APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2018 EIA
DELEGATION WILL BE AVAILABLE ON
THE SJF WEBSITE IN JULY 2017.



More than 1,100 academic workers at the University of Saskatchewan joined PSAC on April 23, 2015. The bargaining unit was certified by the Saskatchewan Labour Relations Board and comprises all registered graduate students employed by the U of S, including teaching assistants, teaching fellows, student assistants and research assistants. The academic workers voted 96% in favour of joining PSAC. The new unit joined 22,000 PSAC members in 51 other bargaining units at 24 different Canadian universities, including the University of Winnipeg and Brandon University.

Additionally, postdoctoral fellows at the University of Saskatchewan were certified on November 1, 2016. Bargaining will begin in 2017 for the 400 or so members.

On December 9, 2016, the Manitoba Labour Board issued a bargaining certificate for approximately 30 members at the Winnipeg Airport in its WASCO subsidiary, Bouygues Energies and Services Canada Limited. We are currently still before the Manitoba Labour Board challenging that the Winnipeg Airport Authority is the true employer and not the subsidiary.

We also organized a unit of Winnipeg Protective Services Officers, with 35 members who perform security services at the Winnipeg Royal Canadian Mint facility. They ratified their first collective agreement on March 1, 2017.

We are currently working on organizing RCMP civilian members as part of a national campaign and new members will join existing bargaining units represented by PSAC and USGE—PSAC’s component representing members working in Canada’s federal justice system. PSAC/USGE is the only union currently organizing civilian members that has the combined expertise of Treasury Board negotiations and RCMP labour relations.





ASBESTOS

The federal government has announced its commitment to banning asbestos and asbestos-containing products by 2018. PSAC has been calling on the federal government to ban the import, export and manufacturing of asbestos for years. The federal government will create new regulations to ban asbestos, establish new federal workplace health and safety rules, and enhance the registry for federally owned buildings.

We're celebrating this decision in loving memory of our brother Howard Willems, who passed away on November 8, 2012. While battling a vicious occupational disease caused by inhaling asbestos fibers, Howard successfully lobbied for the introduction of legislation, known as Howard's Law, requiring all public buildings in Saskatchewan containing asbestos to be reported in a public registry. This is a long-awaited decision and victory for all workers.

REGIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY CONFERENCE

The 2015 Prairies Regional Health & Safety Conference was held November 21-22, 2015 in Winnipeg with over 60 PSAC members in attendance from across the Prairies. Over the course of two days, members participated in three workshops, including: Representing Members with DI and WCB Concerns; Medical Privacy—What Info the Employer is Entitled to and When; and Mental Health First-Aid.

BILL C-4

Health and safety information sessions were held in several locations in the Prairies in early 2015. The 90-minute sessions reviewed the significant changes with the introduction of Bill C-4, which seriously undermines the health and safety protections in the Canada Labour Code covering workers under federal jurisdiction. Members appreciated the

opportunity to learn more about the topic and committed to taking the information back to their locals and building on the awareness and education. Despite committing to reverse these harmful changes, the Liberal government has yet to take action.

STOP WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

PSAC's "Stop Workplace Violence" campaign was designed to empower members to deal effectively with individual and institutional workplace violence. As part of this campaign, a two-day course was offered in regional offices throughout the Prairies in 2016, with applications exceeding capacity. Feedback on the sessions was overwhelmingly positive with members saying they had been waiting for this type of course. We are now preparing to do another round across the region. A webinar was also held in March 2016. The recording is available on the PSAC Prairies YouTube channel.

WCB

As part of the *Workers Compensation Act* Legislative Review, PSAC Prairies submitted an analysis of the issues for consideration on behalf of the more than 8,000 PSAC members living and working in Manitoba. We would like to thank the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba, and the *Workers Compensation Act* Legislative Review Committee 2016 for the opportunity to share our thoughts on how to ensure The *Workers Compensation Act* is up to date and meets the needs of all involved.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

In 2007, Statistics Canada released a report called *Criminal Victimization in the Workplace*. Highlights from the report include the following:

- Nearly one-fifth of all incidents of violent victimization, including physical assault, sexual assault and robbery, occurred in the victim's workplace.
- 71% of the workplace violent incidents were classified as physical assaults.
- Men and women were equally likely to have reported experiencing workplace violence.
- 27% of incidents involving male victims resulted in injuries, compared with 17% of those involving female victims.

WORKPLACE BULLYING

The Workplace Bullying Institute conducted a survey in 2012 of 552 full-time employed Canadians and found the following:

- 45% of respondents said they were bullied. Sources of bullying were: 24% coworker, 23% immediate boss, 17% higher manager, 17% external to company (e.g. customers).
- Only one-third of workers reported the bullying to HR.
- One-third of bullied workers said it caused them health problems.
- 26% of bullied workers stopped the bullying by quitting their jobs.

**Stats from PSAC's Stop Workplace Violence Kit, available at psacunion.ca*