

Official magazine of LiUNA! Local 1611

# THE LABOURER

Spring — 2023

## TUNNEL VISION

Members take tunnelling training in Elma, Washington

Canucks, Lions become  
LiUNA partners

Day of Mourning

**LiUNA!** Local  
1611  
BC & YUKON



# Membership milestone: 10,000 and counting

Balloons didn't drop from the ceiling.

There were no airhorns or other noisemakers.

No one applauded enthusiastically.

But some time in the fall, LiUNA Local 1611 quietly signed up our 10,000th member.

"We were not surprised when it happened, but at the same time we had no chance to stop and think about what that meant, simply because everyone has just been so busy with all the other things that come with having a vast, diverse and engaged membership," said Nav Malhotra, Business Manager/Secretary Treasurer.

It was a huge milestone. With a growth rate of 26 per cent in just the last two years, Local 1611 is now the biggest LiUNA local in the Northwest Region, the second biggest in Canada and one of the Top 10 largest locals in North America.

While overall union membership across North America is on the rise as workers look to better their lives, Local 1611's growth is unprecedented. Malhotra attributes the explosion in membership to the hard work and commitment of our

organizers, recruiters, service representatives and other staff, as well as to workers choosing Local 1611 for superior wages, benefits, training and member representation.

But there is also pride in a union, says Malhotra, and he believes that's a factor, too. Local 1611 has a reputation for supporting community initiatives and programs through direct donations and sponsorships.

"Our members tell us that these organizations are important to them in their communities, and whether it's a local food bank, free counselling services or programs for people with disabilities – we are privileged to be able to provide support," said Malhotra.

In December, Local 1611 donated more than \$230,000 to almost 75 non-profits.

"That is the vital role our union and the labour movement plays in the economic security and prosperity of everyone."

At more than 10,000 members in construction, health care, service, rail, security, parking enforcement and mining, to name a few sectors, Local 1611 remains a powerful force for good.

## LiUNA partners with Canucks and BC Lions

LiUNA Local 1611 is scoring goals and touchdowns with our latest recruitment strategies!

We've partnered with the Vancouver Canucks and the BC Lions to raise awareness of the benefits of belonging to our union and working in construction.

"The industry is experiencing a crushing shortage of workers all across Canada," said Nav Malhotra, Local 1611's Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer. "Traditional recruitment strategies are just not good enough anymore and so we decided to do something different – something big."

According to the latest data from Statistics Canada, industry growth is far outpacing growth in the workforce. Meanwhile, 22 per cent of the construction labour force is expected to retire in the next decade.

"We advertise, we attend career fairs, we sponsor events, we do high school outreach, and we work hard to connect with underrepresented groups, and while those initiatives have moved the needle, we needed to do more," explains Malhotra.

Through a partnership with the Vancouver Canucks, Local 1611 is featured on the rinkboard, scoreclock halo and on the concourse at Rogers Arena during Vancouver Canucks home games. In addition, viewers watching at home will see Local 1611 on digitally enhanced dasherboards (DED) at various times during all home and away games. DED is a brand new concept for the National Hockey League, allowing camera-visible arena advertising to be digitally replaced by dynamic branding.

For football fans, we're also a new presenting

sponsor of the BC Lions Orange Shirt Day game and Indigenous Youth Development programs. Local 1611's logo will appear on 10,000 Orange Shirts given away at the game and our union will be recognized in various ways during CFL football season, from Terry Fox Plaza in Vancouver to game field and LED boards.

Importantly, Local 1611's sponsorship will also support the Lions' four-week Indigenous Youth Development program, which aims to build and invest in Indigenous youth through support. The program includes flag football practices and educational workshops culminating in an eight-game tourney and barbecue at the Lions' training facility in Surrey.

"We are committed to enhancing training and work opportunities for Indigenous Peoples and we know that these programs help to reduce barriers to employment by equipping participants with additional life skills developed through sport," said Malhotra.

The Lions partnership builds on Local 1611's commitment to meaningful engagement with Indigenous Peoples. Our training school is already the No. 1 sponsor of Indigenous apprentices in our size category in the Building Trades, and we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the BC Métis Federation last year to prioritize training and jobs for Métis Peoples.

Local 1611 is the only labour union to enter partnership agreements with the Vancouver Canucks and BC Lions. Across the border, Seattle-based LiUNA Local 242 sponsors the Seattle Kraken NHL team.





Corry Anderson-Fennell  
Director of Communications/Political Liaison



## Editor's Message

When I joined LiUNA Local 1611 last July, I had a pretty good idea of what unions are all about, and the positive differences they make in the lives of working people. I grew up in a labour household and spent a fair share of my childhood bringing donuts to one picket line or another. But Local 1611 takes the responsibility all unions share in making life better to an entirely new level – the next level, really.

In December, we donated more than \$230,000 to local charities and non-profit programs. We bargained new, astonishing collective agreements for our members. We connected our members who needed it with appropriate counselling and assistance programs. We helped our members put their families through school. We lobbied on behalf of our members in Victoria and Ottawa. And we won settlements for our injured members so they could heal with dignity.

That's the tip of the iceberg.

The Labourer is a place to share these stories, and I do hope you read them and take pride in knowing that none of this good work would be possible without you.

## Thousands in scholarships up for grabs by members

Hey, members! You've got a big reason to smile because it's Scholarship Season! The LiUNA Northwest Regional Office is proud to offer the following 2023 scholarships to members and their families through the W. Vernie Reed Memorial Fund:

- ♦ One \$8,000 scholarship to the Pamela Reed winner
  - ♦ Twenty-two (22) \$4,000 Local Union scholarships
  - ♦ Six (6) \$4,000 scholarships for the District Councils and Western Canada Subregional Office
  - ♦ Up to ten (10) \$3,000 At-Large Scholarships
- Scholarships are available to members and their dependents, including grandchildren.

For more information and to apply: [nwliuna.org/scholarship](http://nwliuna.org/scholarship)

## Additional scholarships

The 2023 Local 1611 scholarship applications are also available as of April 1. Pass this fantastic union benefit around the coffee room – we want to top last year's number of applicants and help even more members and their families with their education costs. Visit [liuna1611.org/scholarships](http://liuna1611.org/scholarships) for details.

## #WeAreTheLabourers

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# Honour those who have died by fighting for the living

By Nav Malhotra | Business Manager/Secretary-Treasurer

Workplace injuries cost 30 construction workers their lives in 2021.

That's one worker every 12 days. As we do every year on the National Day of Mourning April 28, we will stand in silence this month to remember these construction workers, and all the other workers who went to work and didn't come home.

We do this a lot. In January, we joined the BC Building Trades, affiliated construction unions and local government representatives at the annual Bentall Memorial in Vancouver to commemorate the lives of four carpenters who plunged to their deaths from the 36th floor of Bentall IV in 1981.

And three months earlier, in September, we attended the official dedication of the Asbestos Memorial on the waterfront at the Vancouver Convention Centre. The memorial is to the thousands of workers who have died and continue to die from asbestos exposure. They say dying from asbestos exposure is like slowly drowning to death.

Never far from our thoughts at these events are the 26 members of our own union who were horrifically killed in the 1965 Granduc Mine slide. We have two monuments at our head office; one honours these miners and the other pays

tribute to all the members who have died in various other workplace tragedies as far back as 1972.

It would be a hallmark of progress if we never attended another memorial to fallen workers and never added any more names to a monument of workplace tragedy. But that requires a break from reality. Instead, we commit to doing everything we can to ensure workers go home to their families at the end of the day. This includes lobbying for regulatory changes that make workplaces safer.

As members of the BC Federation of Labour, the BC Building Trades, local labour councils and a network of LiUNA union locals across North America whose members number in the many hundreds of thousands, we have the power. Can you feel it?

Though union solidarity is one of our greatest strengths, we sometimes forget its stunning power.

Thanks to the power of solidarity, the province enacted life-saving changes to the Workers Compensation Act last year. Now, contractors performing asbestos abatement must be licensed to operate in B.C., and the workers and employers who perform asbestos abatement must complete mandatory safety training and certification.

The many public awareness campaigns undertaken by Labour around a worker's right to refuse unsafe work have also, finally, led to modernization of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation. Now, employers must inform workers assigned a certain task whether other workers have refused that task out of concern for their own safety. Previously, the employer could merely reassign a task deemed unsafe by one worker to another worker, without ever telling the second worker the task had been refused for safety reasons.

And most recently, the BC NDP government enacted changes to the Employment Standards Act requiring workers to be at least 16 years old to work in construction, and at least 18 years old to do certain higher risk jobs like oil and gas drilling, confined space, and any job that requires a respirator.

Prior to these amendments, which were introduced in phases after significant consultation, children as young as 12 could work in our industry. This was facilitated by the former BC Liberal government, which reduced the minimum age from 15 to 12 and allowed employers to pay an insulting "training wage" that was \$2 an hour below the minimum wage at the time.

So while we will always mourn the dead, let us never cease to feel and use our power to fight for the living.

**"It would be a hallmark of progress if we never attended another memorial to fallen workers."**



Memorial outside Local 1611's main office in Surrey.





# Union service in an era of self-service

## In memoriam: For two fallen Brothers

By Mark Olsen | President

In the Local 1611 Christmas magazine, I wrote an article about the importance of the three words that have encircled the LIUNA logo for 120 years, namely JUSTICE, HONOUR and STRENGTH.

Two members have passed away since that article was written, who both epitomized those words in practice. As such, we now want to honour **Leroy Vollans** and **Brian Cox**, two longtime members of LIUNA in B.C.

### Leroy Vollans



It was some time in the year 2000 that I remember meeting Leroy in Vernon, B.C. at a meeting of **Wescon** employees, where Leroy worked. Wescon was a precast concrete plant in Armstrong that was certified with the Union for decades. We were preparing for another round of bargaining with Wescon and we knew it would be very contentious.

Bargaining, as anticipated, did not go well, and we knew we would be locked out, so we took pre-emptive strike action starting July 25, 2001.

Leroy was one of 40-plus members who shut down the plant and began to picket. The strike ended up lasting for over five years, one of the longest in B.C. history and did not end until the anti-union Labour Board (under the B.C. Liberal government of the day) declared it over.

The plant has been mothballed for years now, it never resumed as a union operation. Local 1611 ran a 24-hour, seven-day-per-week picket line and Leroy very quickly became our Lead Picket Captain and key contact for me as their Union representative.

In fact, Leroy was on the line almost every day of the five-year strike. He was committed to his fellow members and the Union, and believed that a reasonable Collective Agreement was worth fighting for.

Leroy had many tough issues to manage, from trucks running the line, scabs, harassment and threats, legal proceedings at the Labour Board and in court and even a drive-by shooting when a bullet hit the picket shack (to read the whole story, see our Local 1611 history book, *Building the Power*, on our website).

All the while Leroy held the line, he held his cool, a quiet but effective leader.

After the strike was over, we needed something good to come out of a bad situation, so Local 1611 hired Leroy as a full-time Service Representative in 2007. For the next dozen or so years until his retirement, Leroy was the Union's representative in the Okanagan, Interior and later added the Kootenays.

Leroy was a quiet, composed and professional representative who did very good work in a very difficult job. Leroy was also a trustee on the Union's Medical and Pension

Plan for a period of time.

Throughout his 41 years of membership and his varied roles, Leroy truly believed in the Union and the membership.

In fact, Leroy's wife Kim said that when the ambulance arrived at their home to take him to the hospital, he refused to go until he put on a Local 1611 shirt. That's Leroy, it was an honour and a privilege to have known him.

### Brian Cox



Brian was a true Tunnel and Rock worker as a proud member of Local 168, which later became part of the merger to form Local 1611 in 1997. Brian would have achieved 50 years of continuous

membership next year.

As a driller, blaster and underground miner, Brian, who lived in the Kootenays, became an integral member on the tools and in the lunchroom, boardroom and meeting room, advocating for the rights of the membership.

Brian was a passionate and professional leader who always put the members first. Brian assumed many critical roles in and for the Union, from being the head Job Steward on many jobsites, including the Celgar Pulp Mill Project; he helped organize **Paramount Drilling and Blasting**; and worked for many contractors including **Columbia Hydro Constructors**, **Emil Anderson Construction**, **West Kootenay Mechanical**, **Clayburn** and **Dillingham**, to name a few. He was not only a key area member and often a Job Steward, he also worked as a foreman and general foreman. And in his latter years, he even worked for the Union part-time on holiday relief as a Service Representative in the Kootenays.

Brian was a true trade unionist and his work ethic was unmatched. He also attended every Union information meeting he could and attended all the Retiree Club events in his area.

Brian was a very special member and person who always had the interests of the members foremost in his mind. He leaves behind his wife Rose, who was also a member of Local 1611.

I was very honoured and privileged to have known and worked with Leroy and Brian when they were Picket Captains or Job Stewards and then Representatives of the Union. They were different from each other, but both very effective in their own way. And they both shared a common goal, what they wished for themselves, they wished for all.

On behalf of Nav Malhotra, the Executive Board and the entire membership, I pass on our deepest condolences to Kim Vollans and Rose Cox.

We all miss Leroy and Brian very much.  
Rest in Peace, Brothers.

# 2021/22 ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## MEMBERSHIP

- Reached membership milestone of 10,000+ through recruitment and organizing
- Became largest LiUNA local in Western Canada
- Improved medical and pension benefits (+14% since 2019)
- Awarded Contractor of the Year and Member of the Year
- Established Labourers CARE and Youth Advisory committees
- Held 85/25 celebrations throughout BC
- Developed virtual meeting alternatives for general membership meetings, training courses
- Delivered various training to almost 6,000 members
- Secured more than \$1 Billion in additional construction work through expansion of Community Benefits Agreement
- Successfully lobbied for improvements to BC Labour Code and Employment Standards Act
- Kept connected with retired members throughout COVID

## FINANCE

- Accrued \$8.1 million surplus
- Invested in strategic partnerships to expand recruitment
- Increased by 7% monthly pension for retirees, and credits for active members
- Created in-person & online shop steward courses

## COMMUNITY

- Expanded community and charity engagement throughout BC, driven by membership desire
- Directly donated more than \$500,000 over two years to community-driven non-profit organizations and programs
- Provided direct assistance to Ukrainians fleeing war & Maritime victims of Hurricane Fiona
- Acquired a mobile organizing/recruitment vehicle

## INDIGENOUS ENGAGEMENT

- Signed MOU with BC Metis Federation to prioritize jobs and training
- Incorporated Indigenous flag & developed Indigenous commemorative emblem
- Waived initiation fee for Indigenous workers
- Invested in key programs supporting Indigenous Peoples
- Became No. 1 sponsor of Indigenous apprentices in the Building Trades for our size
- Included Indigenous acknowledgment of unceded territory on all communications & correspondence, and at start of meetings





# 2023 GOALS

- Develop five-year Strategic Plan
- Reach 11,000 members
- Organize 17 new companies, including contractors working on green energy projects and at least one Indigenous-owned business
- Expand market share in precast, civil and roadbuilding sectors
- Initiate youth committee and continue to support Empower Youth program
- Support youth programs and initiatives, increase youth engagement
- Develop partnerships with sporting teams to increase reach, engagement and recruitment
- Expand scholarship program for members and their families
- Offer scholarships specifically for underrepresented groups such as Indigenous and women members
- Expand donations to member-supported community non-profits
- Resume Retiree Club events provincewide and continue Generation U publication
- Provide various training to staff, including cultural competency, occupational first aid and mental health
- Provide educational opportunities for membership
- Increase presence at trade shows and high school/industry career fairs
- Develop Local 1611 app
- Support the BC NDP with the goal of keeping them in power through the next election
- Lobby for changes to the Temporary Foreign Worker program, and cessation of the International Mobility Program in construction
- Lobby for expansion of public infrastructure projects under the Community Benefits Agreement framework

POWER

OPPORTUNITY

STRENGTH

LIVE BETTER. JOIN LIUNA

LEADERSHIP



- Lobby for expansion of public infrastructure projects under the Community Benefits Agreement framework
- Lobby for stronger Labour Laws, Employment Standards and WorkSafeBC regulations to protect workers
- Support the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples through increased Indigenous engagement and meaningful programming
- Reduce barriers to employment for Indigenous People, support and enhance Indigenous training and work opportunities
- Increase funding to Training PLUS
- Seek additional training funds from the provincial and federal governments
- Build new courses, including Green Hat Orientation, rakerman, drug and alcohol awareness, H2S awareness, confined space entry rescue, chainsaw safety, utility locating, foreperson, rock and underground-related, Naloxone.
- Procure new space to allow for the expansion of Training PLUS







Lower Mainland

## Feel the power and feel the pride

By Mike Berg | Service Representative

**W**e have a slogan here at LiUNA: Feel the Power. When I joined Local 1611 back in 1997 and started my career in construction, I thought it was a reference to the work we do. We move earth, we tunnel underground, we pave the way, literally, for big infrastructure projects in every corner of this province.

But it also means something else, and that is the collective power of a union to fight for its own members, and also for the betterment of the communities where we all live, work, learn and play.

LiUNA does this in hundreds of ways. In December, Local 1611 donated more than \$230,000 to charities and non-profit organizations, most of which were chosen by our members because of a positive impact they had in their lives. Two initiatives we supported that are close to my heart are the Surrey School District's BASES program and the Gateway Home Health Team.

### BASES

BASES, which is an acronym for Building Academic, Social and Employment Skills, works with students with complex needs reach their potential by providing academic and social skills programming. For these amazing students, every day is about overcoming challenges, and they're doing it! I know many of them personally, and it warms me to the soul to observe their every success in the BASES program.



Students in the BASES program.

### Gateway Home Health Team

The nurses, social workers and home support workers who comprise the Gateway Home Health Team assist at-risk adults living in poverty, self-neglect, caregiver neglect and sometimes abuse. The team helps them access food, shelter, heat, fans in hot weather and transportation. These adults struggle with severe mental health issues, intellectual disabilities or dementia, and they rely almost entirely on formal community support systems and government resources. And as you can imagine, that is never enough, so sometimes the team personally fundraises for them or pays for necessities themselves from their own pocket. LiUNA's support helped ease this burden and assist some of the most vulnerable people in our community.

Our union cannot do this good work without you, our members. And for that, we thank you.



## Future is bright with tunnel vision

By Jesse Saunders | Service Representative

**I** am excited about the future of Local 1611 in tunneling! The word is out that there are new projects ramping up soon. We are proving that since Local 168 and Tunnel and Rock amalgamated into Local 1611, we have the experienced workers that employers want and trust to get the job done. From hard rock to soft ground and everything in between, LiUNA is ready to accept the challenges.

A special thanks to those in our membership who paved the

way, allowing us to be the new faces working underground for our Local. We are reaching out, like they did back in the day, to get our membership involved in the work of tunnelling. We are now offering possibilities to learn and become involved in that work.

Training PLUS has taken the initiative of working with LiUNA affiliates in Elma, Washington to provide our membership with specific SHAFT (Safety & Hazard Awareness for Tunnels) and Tunnel Utility & Rail courses that will enable our Local to provide skilled Labourers to the employers who count on us.

For further information contact [training@liuna1611.ca](mailto:training@liuna1611.ca).





## Is 2023 the Year of the Labourer?

By Manuel Alvernaz | *Special Representative*

### Con-Force and Fred Thompson Contractors are busier than ever

**T**he **Con-Force** workforce has increased by 50 per cent in the last three months, from 91 to 136 employees, thanks to the BC NDP's Community Benefits Agreement construction framework, which ensures workers on major public infrastructure projects earn family-supporting wages and have access to training and advancement opportunities.

From the Kicking Horse Canyon in Northeast B.C. to the Broadway Subway corridor in Vancouver, Local 1611 members with Con-Force Structures have been there. These projects include the Quartz Creek Bridge, Highway 5 flood restoration, the Pattullo Bridge Replacement and the Highway 91 Exchange. People use these highways, byways and bridges to get where they need to be, and it's all thanks to the work you do.

### Surrey Langley SkyTrain



Con-Force is in the final stages of securing over 5,000 precast units for this 16-kilometre line between Surrey and Langley, which will mean more work for our members throughout 2023 and beyond.



### Parkland Refinery

**Parkland's** eight-week maintenance shutdown began the first week of February with 190 members in orientation at the end of January and beginning of February. More than 150 members were actively working by the third week of February.

To our members, thank you for all your hard work and professionalism. Stay safe and healthy.

### Fred Thompson Contractors

2022 was a solid year in Hydro utility maintenance work for **Fred Thompson Contractors**, and 2023 looks even busier. Our members there will increase by approximately 25 per cent.

This is work that was previously contracted elsewhere by BC Hydro. With Fred Thompson's recent acquisition of additional equipment, our members are now able to do the work.



*Pictured with the company's new trucks are General Manager Jack Eusebio (left) and Job Steward Bruno Pereira (right).*



By Lisa Flesher | *Service Representative*

## Demand for traffic control doesn't slow down

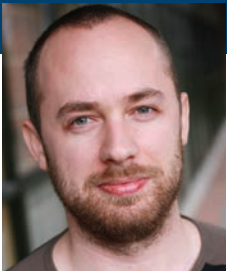
**T**raffic control continues to be booming. The great news is that **Ansan** has secured their contract with the City of Vancouver for another three years with the option to renew for another six years. **One Stop Safety** is now under new management and has secured numerous new contracts. **Dinamac, Tangerine, Glen Traffic, United traffic** and **BCW** continue to supply the **Trans Mountain** pipeline. I also want to welcome **Safeside** to our list of signatory traffic control companies.

As many of our members know, the majority of our traffic control agreements expire this year, so watch for a notification of a proposal meeting being held in the near future. I encourage all of you to attend and make your voices heard.

**Bannister** has joined **Michels Canada** on Spread 6 of the Trans Mountain Expansion Project. Both Bannister and Michels Canada have had 24-hour crews dealing with water due to our rainy season. Spread 7a is expected to have most of the pipe in the ground by the end of this summer. A great job done by our hard-working pipeliners!

Finally, I would like to thank the Job Stewards and members for all their hard work.

Want a site visit? Please send me a text at 604-833-1668 with your work site so I can come by with some swag and say hi!



Vancouver Island

## Job Stewards ensure members know their rights

By Brady Carter | Service Representative

A big focus for Vancouver Island this year will be recruiting and training Job Stewards. Stewards are key pillars in the union community that act as a first line of defence and communication for our membership.

Job Stewards can fill many different roles but one of the most important is alerting local Service Representatives to possible Collective Agreement violations or disciplinary actions by an employer. An early warning can sometimes allow the Union to mitigate or solve problems before they get out of control. In addition, Job Stewards may help by welcoming new members to the Union when starting their first Union job.

This web of communication and community helps ensure that members know their rights and have full access to Union services available to them. Job Stewards are our eyes and ears in the field and for those acting in this role now, I thank you!

If you are interested in being a Job Steward, please reach out and let me know. The Union has plans to offer courses soon and I will be planning meetings with potential Stewards to explain in detail what this role may look like for you.

This season we welcome new members working with **Copcan Civil** to the Union. At the time of this writing, their Collective Agreement was in the final stages of ratification. Work is also picking up at the Cowichan District Hospital Replacement Project under the **Community Benefits** model. The Union is actively seeking Labourers with concrete or civil experience local to the Duncan area. Please reach out anytime with a resume or contact information.

We are still awaiting pre-job meetings for work at the John Hart generating station in Campbell River but stay tuned for more details. All the best in 2023 to you and your families.

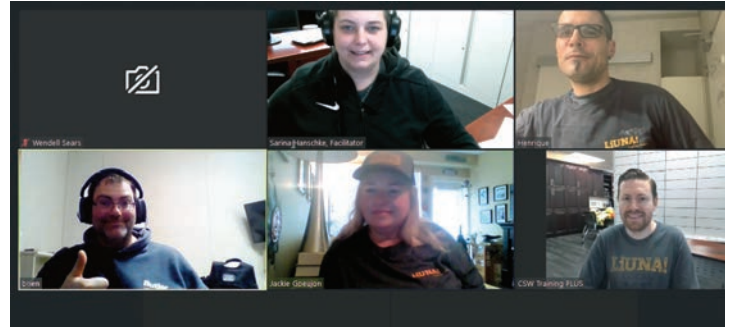
Lower Mainland



## Job Steward training up and running

By Nathan Ferguson | Recruitment Officer/Service Representative

Local 1611 ran its first two instructor-led Job Steward courses, with the most recent being the Feb.5 construction sector class (pictured).



By all accounts, both courses were a smashing success. A big thank-you to all of the Stewards who took the time out of their Sundays to attend these classes. Your dedication to your Union brothers and sisters is commendable, and Local 1611 will continue to support you in and out of the workplace. Please see the list below for the next set of tentative instructor-led courses and scan the QR code next to this article to register for the course of your choice. Registration will close as each class fills up:

- Sunday, April 16
- Sunday, April 30
- Sunday, May 21
- Sunday, Sept. 17
- Sunday, Oct. 8
- Sunday, Oct. 22



Job Steward  
Sign Up

I look forward to seeing the rest of our Stewards in class!



Northeast

## New contracts, new contractors and revisiting some Christmas cheer

By Chris Mansel | Service Representative

I would like to take a different approach to this year's newsletter and start with some notable events that took place in 2022.

In mid-2022, LiUNA signed a company called **Carpi Tech Canada** to the **Site C** agreement. Carpi Tech installs waterproofing on dams all around the world. When I heard this, I wanted to make sure that we get them signed up to LiUNA as soon as possible as there would be a substantial amount of experience and opportunity for the members

working with them. Carpi Tech was signed up and they got started last summer.

Another memorable event was the renegotiation of the **Garda** agreement, which included a raise and 100 per cent benefits coverage to the five-year-plus employees, and added some much-needed wording to the transportation clause that includes the Northeast and Vancouver Island Garda employees into the agreement.

At Christmas, we shared the spirit of the season in our

*Continued on page 11*





Northeast

## Last big construction year for members on Coastal GasLink

By Roger Bennett | Service Representative

While we are off to a busy start with our pipeline work again, this will be the last big construction year for the **Coastal GasLink** project. It's hard to believe the CGL project kicked off in 2019 and has provided nearly 1,000 good-paying jobs to our members for four years!

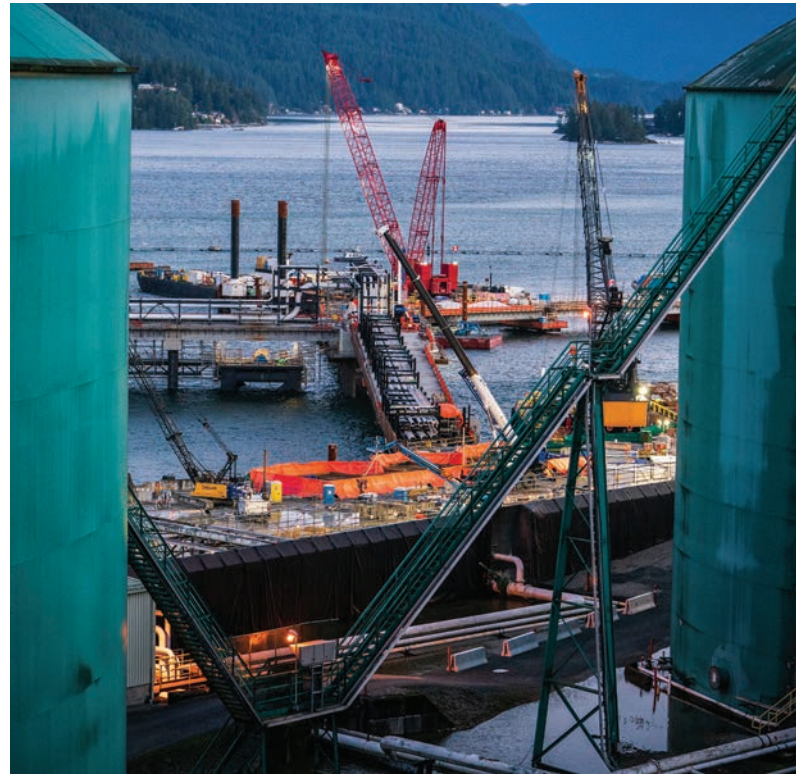
The look ahead is to gain potential work with **Enbridge** on loop line and compressor stations on the **Sunrise** and **Aspen** projects. Work would begin in 2024 if our contractors' bids are successful. We will also be organizing new companies to keep our members employed after projects are completed. And we'd also appreciate any workers from non-union companies that members can send our way.

Prior to the 2022 Christmas break, **SA Energy**, Section 3, had 65 per cent pipe installed. **Michels Canada**, Section 6, had 50 per cent pipe in the ground and **OJ Pipelines**, Section 7, was at 35 per cent. Meanwhile, **Banister's** 4B Spread on the **Trans Mountain Pipeline** was completed at the end of 2022.

Local Prince George companies kept members steadily working until the Christmas break. **Progrus Constructors**, **WCIC**, **CMH Underground**, **Viking**, **WIC**, **Lafarge**, **Pittman Asphalt**, **Alliance Traffic**, **A&B Rail**, and **PG Hydro Mechanical** are all returning to project work for 2023.

Some additional good news from 2022: We renewed agreements with **PG Hydro Mechanical**, **A&B Rail** and **Alliance Traffic**, plus we signed a new company, **Pioneer Rail**. Pioneer has an extensive background in underground track laying and they installed all the track work for the **Kemano** project.

And finally, on Jan. 17, we attended the 20th Annual BC Natural Resources Forum in Prince George. This forum was attended by Premier David Eby, plus numerous panel speakers



Work at Trans Mountain's Westridge Marine Terminal.  
Trans Mountain Photo

and stakeholders. All that spoke echoed the need for job diversity in the Northern Region, additional training, and more new sustainable jobs.

*Continued from page 10*

communities. The poly-party unions at Site C (LiUNA, CMAW, IUOE) came together on a donation with **AFDE** matching an incredible total of \$40,000 to help various charities around Fort St. John and the surrounding area. Also in keeping with our Union's yearly tradition, LiUNA donated to charities around our office in Prince George, such as the New Hope Society and the PG Native Friendship Centre. Both of these organizations help house anyone in need when the weather starts to turn cold up here in the north.

Work in the Northeast will begin to decline come September, but with our membership continuing to exceed expectations on the job, we are seeing that many of the companies want to use our expertise on future projects.



Site C intakes.



Northwest

## Charities helping people and pets thrive

By Jordan Heal | Service Representative

Over the past few months, LiUNA Local 1611 with contractors **ServcoCanada** and **SL&B Consultants** made donations to non-profit organizations within the community of Kitimat. The three of us made a group donation to the Kitimat Food Bank, while Local 1611 and ServcoCanada made donations together to the Kitimat General Hospital Foundation, Tamitik Status of Women and the Kitimat Community Humane Society.

Of all the organizations that we went to, the one that resonated the most with me after spending time there was the Kitimat Community Humane Society. At the time of our visit, there were 64 dogs and 141 cats that were looking for their forever homes. They take in animals from all over the Northwest who otherwise would not have a home. The Humane Society tries to rehome as many of the animals that they can in the local area but they also work with other organizations to find homes for animals elsewhere. We thank

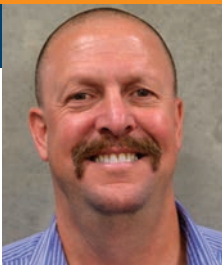


Gerald Gagnon of 101 Industries.

them for the amazing work they do 24 hours a day.

The **LNG Canada** project is now approximately 70 per cent completed. **Bird Construction** is completing work at the Non Process Buildings and will be finished by early to late spring. In May, they will begin work on the Sumgas Creek Restoration in Kitimat. The enhancements will restore this creek to its natural state prior to alterations made in the 1950s. **Fluor Constructors Canada Ltd.** is ramping up and will have over 350 of our members on site by the end of March.

At **Rio Tinto**, **SL&B Consultants**, **ServcoCanada** and **101 Industries** (a division of **CIMS Limited Partnership**) are actively working on the pot startup campaign and site maintenance. This work will continue throughout the rest of the year.



Okanagan, Interior and Kootenays

## Know your Steward

By Steve Hecocks | Service Representative

With winter now clearly in the rearview mirror, it is time to focus on the season ahead.

Local 1611 generously made donations to many organizations throughout the province this past holiday season. It is nice to see that we as an organization are able to give back to many people in the communities where we work, live and raise our families. **SHARE Society** in Kelowna is one of those organizations that helps out families and individuals who are in need of some extra support during the holidays and throughout the year. Their Christmas hamper program helps people make Christmas special for family and loved ones. They provided 630 hampers during the month of December, which helped put many smiles on faces all around the Kelowna area. They support many people during the year with furniture and clothing, and they also assist people through a community worker program that helps people re-enter the workforce. **SHARE** is an acronym for Self Help Arts Recreation and Education.

With a busy season ahead, I want to remind everyone that our Job Stewards are on sites provincewide to help protect our jurisdiction and make sure we are doing the work Labourers are supposed to do. They are also there to support all our Brothers and Sisters as they navigate the difficulties of balancing a work and personal life in these trying economic

times. Make sure you know who your site Steward is and reach out to them if you have any questions or concerns. It can be a difficult job some days being a Steward, as you are part lawyer, psychologist, parent, mentor and referee. I would like to recognize the Stewards in my area:

- **Kim McAleer, Lisa Beckingham and Dale Leblanc** with Alliance Traffic
- **Emma Lawless-Pennecon** at Quartz Creek
- **Jean Panneton** at KHCC at Kicking Horse Canyon
- **April Lightburn** with West Kootenay Mechanical
- **Michelle Sedmak** with Impark-Kelowna Parking
- **Dayman Grant** with Emil Anderson Construction
- **Nolen Wiens** with Emil Anderson on the Highway 5 reinstatement project
- **Amanda Brennan** with CIF at Chase Highway 1 project
- **Dan Glennie** with Glacier Blasting
- Plus all the Stewards for CIMS during the shutdown at Teck: **Dan Jago, Shelly Stetsko, Petridis Sabeen, Rachel Haywood and Kelly Hansen.**

Please remember to check in with Dispatch regularly if you are looking for work, and make sure they have a copy of all your valid tickets and updated resume. At the end of the day, they are the ones who dispatch you to work, so let's make sure you are giving yourself the best opportunity to secure good Union jobs.

If you require training, please reach out to the Training Plan or your area Union Representative to inquire about when and where the training will be this spring and summer.

In closing I want to let all the Brothers and Sisters know I appreciate all that you do to make our Union a stronger and better place for everyone.





## Trouble reaching WCB? Here's the secret to success

By Tony Parkinson | *Workers' Advocate*

**W**hile you are on a workers' compensation claim, keeping in regular contact with WCB (WorksafeBC) is extremely important. This can be for a variety of reasons, including updating your claim status, providing medical information, or requesting additional benefits. Unfortunately, it can often be exceedingly difficult to contact someone at WCB who is involved with your claim. We hear from members all the time that they have not been able to reach their case manager, vocational rehabilitation consultant, or another WCB employee. This can make the claim process much more frustrating and may result in it taking longer for you to get benefits, services, or medical treatment.

If you are having a problem reaching someone at WCB, this is what we suggest:

- Do not use the person's direct line. This goes to their voicemail and there is no way to track if you left a message, when you called, or how many times you called.
- Call the WCB call centre instead, at 604-231-8888. Ask to speak to the person you are looking for, and if they are not available, ask to leave a call back request on the claim file. This will remain on the claim file forever and will keep a record of every time you call.

- If the person does not call you back after two business days, call again and repeat the same process. Then wait another two business days.
- If they still have not called you back, call the call centre and ask to speak to the Client Services Manager (CSM) on your claim. This is the manager of everyone involved with your claim and they can "light a fire" under the person you are trying to reach to get back to you. The CSM generally won't make decisions on your claim directly, but they can ensure that it is being looked after properly.
- If the CSM does not call you back after two business days, call again and repeat the same process. Then wait another two business days.
- It is important that you follow these steps. That way the CSM knows you have already followed the proper procedure when they get your call back request.

If you have followed these steps and still have not heard from anyone at WCB, please contact us at Labourers' Membership Services right away. We can discuss other options and provide advice about how you should proceed.

If you have any other questions about your WCB, EI or CPP claim, feel free to contact us at 604-538-6992, toll-free 1-888-788-2888, or email [info@lms1611.org](mailto:info@lms1611.org).



## After 3 difficult years Retiree events are back on!

By Bruce Ferguson | *Retiree Club President*

**I**t is a pleasure to have this opportunity to report to you.

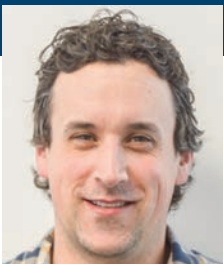
The past three years have been a difficult time for everyone as we all know due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Fortunately, it is no longer as prevalent in our lives, and so this year we have planned a full agenda of events around our Local 1611 area.

We will once again hold events in Nelson, Kelowna, Victoria, Nanaimo and a big event in Vancouver in early December 2023.

I want to thank all the dedicated and enthusiastic directors of our Retiree Council: Manuel Alvernaz, Derrick Kirk, Manuel Figueredo, Merrick Walsh, Jack Feirrerro and Eduardo Games.

Stay safe and healthy, and I look forward to seeing you at our planned events this year.





# Training the tunnellers of tomorrow

By Tom Miller | Training PLUS Administrator

Every year our training needs morph and evolve as the industry changes and our membership grows. Changing demographics within the industry as well as the increase in work in particular sectors has made things really fun for us at Training PLUS, but also challenging.

One particular sector that we need to start training the future generations for is the tunnelling sector. Traditionally, tunnellers have gone from project to project and so the need to train tunnellers hasn't been there as we have already had a very experienced, qualified and committed group of members that has been able to fulfill our work needs.

Like many things in life, those needs are changing. We have a workforce across all sectors that is retiring at the same time that multiple tunnelling projects are slated to begin over the coming years. Just in 2023 alone we have the Broadway Subway project, the **Michels/Frontier-Kemper** project in Squamish, and the **Aecon/Traylor** project on Annacis Island. Due to the need for new tunnellers in the industry, we recently embarked on a one-of-a-kind Tunnelling Training Program.

This past February, we entered into a partnership with our brothers and Sisters with the Northwest Laborers-Employers Training Trust (NWLETT) out of Washington State. They have

a state-of-the-art training facility in Elma, WA that is set up to specifically train tunnellers.

The training program consisted of three different courses and took place over 2.5 weeks. The first course was Safety and Health Awareness for Tunnels (SHAFT). This course was completely theory-based (classroom only) and took place at our training facility in Surrey. Ronnie O'Connell (NWLETT Instructor) came to our facility and facilitated the course for us. Once that course completed, the students then travelled down to Elma, WA where they spent eight long days training with Ronnie at their Elma, WA facility. The students took two courses while there: Tunnel Rail and Tunnel Utilities. These courses trained our members to not only assemble and disassemble tunnel rail and utilities, but also to utilize the different tools and equipment that our tunnelling members need to use on a regular basis.

It was an amazing experience and one that I am hoping we can partner in again. I want to extend a huge thank-you to not only our members who were amazing through this program, but also to Brandon Jordan, Ronnie O'Connell, and everyone with the NWLETT team. Your expertise and willingness to work with us will help us to train B.C.'s much-needed tunnellers of tomorrow.







Greg Letkeman, Eddie Foong, Donna Mansel | Dispatchers

First and foremost, we would like to thank all our Brothers and Sisters for your continued hard work building our beautiful province. It is the hard work you do day in and day out that makes a real difference for all British Columbians, not to mention, Canada as a whole.

Whether you're working in our service sector, like health care or security, or you're building any of our mega projects like the Site C dam in Fort St John, the LNG site in Kitimat, or either of the big pipeline projects — Coastal GasLink and the Trans Mountain Expansion — you are making a real difference for generations of Canadians to come.

Our Dispatch team strives every day to make a difference as well, in the lives of our members. We work hard to provide opportunities for the membership to obtain good-paying

## Your work is a legacy for future generations

careers that will help them build their homes and raise their families. When we have the chance to change the lives of our Brothers and Sisters for the better, it's very rewarding. And it's extra heartwarming when every so often, a member calls back after being deployed for work, thanking us for helping them get the job. It means everything to us to know that the members are thankful and appreciative of the work we do.

Dispatch can sometimes be under serious time constraints to get dispatch requests filled in a timely manner. This can lead to some wait times as we are trying to make outgoing calls to the membership. If we are not able to get to the phone right away, please leave a voicemail or contact us by email us at [dispatch@cswu1611.org](mailto:dispatch@cswu1611.org).

We wish all our Brothers and Sisters a safe, prosperous 2023!



Sarina Hanschke | Lead Organizer - Oscar Sanchez, Ben Ger and Keith Murdoch | Organizers

Talking with people, learning about their goals and struggles, bridging relationships, building trust, and developing leaders by providing tools and support is what has, and will, advance and grow the union.

Helping others build power in their workplace to enjoy the same benefits and protections brings tremendous joy to our organizing team and builds on the continued strength of LiUNA.

A considerable amount of the work of organizing is about building robust networks based on trust. Our power to help people shift their view of themselves relative to their work and their community comes from the authentic relationships we foster with people. Real relationships also allow us as organizers to best identify leaders, which helps win, propel and

## You are the power

sustain our union for the future.

One of the biggest challenges we encounter is people thinking that what we offer is too good to be true; that's where YOU come in. We'll be reaching out to YOU, our members, this year to connect with current and past coworkers, because the real relationships you've built over your career is a tremendous power to growing your union and enhancing the standard of living.

We have a fantastic opportunity to help grow the union under the worker-friendly NDP government. Please consider small ways you can use your power and help connect us with those we can welcome into the union.

As LiUNA General President Terry O Sullivan says: "May you feel the power, may you be the power, and may you use the power."



## Win \$2,000 for your favourite charity

**Nomination deadline is April 30**

By Shelley Moore

Chair, Labourers' Union Charities

LiUNA Local 1611 is proud to stand with the membership in support of their charities and events throughout the province.

This spring, Labourers' Union Charities (LUC) is offering

members a chance to win \$2,000 for their charity of choice! Entering the contest is easy – just send us an email ([luc@cswu1611.org](mailto:luc@cswu1611.org)) explaining why your chosen charity is the best candidate. Hint: It's helpful to include links to their website if they have one, and whether you've personally observed a difference they've made in someone's life.

If your charity is chosen, they'll get \$2,000 for the good work they do, and you'll get a \$100 gift card for nominating them!

Deadline for entries is April 30.

# Family-owned Bay Hill named Contractor of the Year

By Tatiana Tomljanovic

A few years ago at a Christmas party, Gord Myren, civil manager at **Bay Hill Contracting Ltd.** said, “we want Bay Hill to be the best company to work for.”

Gord Myren is the son of Wilf Myren, one of the founding members of the family-owned and operated company that employs up to three generations associated with the original partners (Bob Burns, Joe DePedrina and Gary Cohen) as well as many other multigenerational families.

“We’re a family business,” said Gord Myren. “We treat people as people.”

Awarded the 2022 Contractor of the Year by LiUNA Local 1611, Bay Hill specializes in civil, electrical and high voltage electrical builds. The company has a high employee retention rate, and prioritizes safety and ongoing education by proactively and routinely making Training PLUS workshops available to their workers.

“They’re just a dream to work with on multiple levels,” said Tom Miller, Training Plan Administrator for 1611. “We’ve done a bunch of courses for them. When they’re slow, say in the winter, rather than keeping people home and not paying them, they bring them in and pay them to be here and get trained.”

Miller nominated Bay Hill for Contractor of the Year citing the company as well-organized, forward thinking, and generous with their time and facilities.

“If we don’t have space, they provide it. Gord rigged up their mezzanine with audio and visual equipment for a workshop,” said Miller. “I needed land to provide pipelaying courses and he put me in contact with the Langley Rugby Club to replace some drainage for the rugby field. I think they have an awesome

culture.”

In addition to keeping their workers’ necessary training current, Myren works with Miller to provide additional educational workshops that include blueprint reading, survey courses and even naloxone training.

“Naloxone training isn’t essential to their core civil work, but they see it as a priority because the opioid epidemic affects construction workers so greatly and they want to keep their employees safe,” said Miller.

According to government and public health studies, 70 per cent of illicit drug overdose deaths in the Fraser Health region were people who worked in the trades industry. “There have been some people who work for us who have been affected by family members passing away due to drug overdoses. For some, it really hits close to home,” said Myren. “We have a commitment to our goal of being the best company to work for and that means looking after our workers.”

The Contractor of the Year award includes a cheque for \$2,500, which Bay Hill plans to use towards supporting their employees’ mental health.



Gord Myren (holding certificate) with 1611’s Tom Miller (right) and Mike Berg (left).

## Local 1611’s Member of the Year goes above and beyond



Member of the Year Travis Rodrigues (second from right) with Service Rep Steve Hecocks (left), Twin Rivers Elementary principal Wendy Cutler (right) and PAC chairperson Catherine Cody.

Steve Hecocks has high praise for Local 1611’s 2022 Member of the Year, Travis Rodrigues.

“He’s the epitome of what a foreman should be,” says Hecocks, Local 1611’s Service Representative in the Interior and Kootenay regions. “He’s always helping all new members any way he can. He’s the type of person I would want as my direct supervisor.”

A general foreman with CIMS, Rodrigues is known for going above and beyond as both a foreman and a union member. He relishes a challenge and isn’t afraid of hard work. He also prioritizes a safe workplace and lets his crew know there are no dumb questions — just unasked ones.

A 10-year member of LiUNA, Rodrigues says he had several great mentors over his career, and he tries to pay it forward by mentoring the younger members he works with now. He also reminds members of the benefits of working in a union.

“I’ve worked on non-union jobs, and they just turn you over and kick you out the door,” said Rodrigues of past non-union work. “To have the security and protection of your union is such a good feeling. Unions are the reason we have holidays and benefits. And you get to go home safe and healthy every day.”

As Member of the Year, Rodrigues received a cheque for \$1,000 for himself, and \$2,500 for his charity of choice: the Twin Rivers Elementary Parent Advisory Council in Castlegar. The PAC ensures all students are treated equitably with the same access to programs, resources and opportunities. That means sometimes subsidizing program fees and other so-called “extras”. Rodrigues hopes the funds will help the school provide hot lunches for students and contribute to an outdoor shelter on the grounds.