

For Immediate Release:

USW membership at KSCU ratify new agreement

Trail, Kimberley, BC – Following 12 months of bargaining and a 27-day labour dispute, the unionized staff at Kootenay Savings Credit Union have ratified a new 4-year collective agreement by a majority vote of the 110 USW members at KSCU.

The ratification vote ends a contentious month-long dispute that began October 28 when the employer locked-out their employees. The ratified agreement contains wage and benefit improvements for the USW members but more importantly, shores up the protective pension language in the collective agreement while also providing some certainty for the employer by capping their liability.

“We returned to the table on Tuesday and the employer came back with a clear change in the approach to resolving the pension issue,” said Dean Lott, USW Staff Rep and lead negotiator for the union. “Their offer of a minimum annual contribution of \$200,000 to cover any potential shortfall if pension changes were made gave our members comfort that their pension level would be protected while at the same time giving the employer certainty in their liability.”

“That’s if there are any changes made to the pension plan. If there isn’t, there’s no impact on the employer or our members.”

With provincial mediator Dave Schaub’s assistance, once the pension issue was agreed-to late Tuesday night, the other outstanding issues fell into place on Wednesday. At two ratification meetings in Trail and Kimberley on Friday, the new agreement was ratified, ending the dispute.

Details of the new agreement include:

- \$1000 lump sum in Year 1; \$1000 lump sum in Year 2; 1.5% wage increase in Year 3 and 2% in Year 4;
- 4-year agreement expiring December 31, 2019;
- Resolution of the Pension Protection Language issue
- Improved Vision Care benefit to \$300/bi-annually
- Increased Health Care Spending Account to \$500/annually
- Increased Paramedical Benefits from \$200 to \$500 annually but capping Massage to \$500 annually
- Improved Staff Banking Benefits
- No change to Hours of Work
- Return of 3rd Floater for full-time employees lost with the declaration of BC Family Day in 2013

The United Steelworkers (USW) Local 9705 (Trail) and USW Local 1-405 (Cranbrook) represent 110 employees at KSCU branches and offices in Trail, Fruitvale, Castlegar, Salmo, South Slocan, Kaslo and Kimberley.

USW Local 9705 represents over 400 members including the Office and Technical Employees of Teck Operations in Trail; Kootenay Savings Credit Union; Red Mountain Resort; Kootenay Boundary Regional Hospital/IHA, Kootenay Insurance Services, Sandman Inn in Castlegar and Waneta Plaza in Trail.

USW Local 1-405 based in Cranbrook is a diverse union representing over 1200 workers in Sawmills, Pole Plants, Credit Unions, Insurance Services, Hotels, Ski Resorts and Municipal workers in the East and West Kootenays.