

Innovative Workplace Practices

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This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 107 collective agreement settlements negotiated during the second quarter of 2003. Of these, slightly over one-half (58 settlements) contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

The trend over the past year towards 36-month durations continues. Of the 107 settlements reviewed during the quarter, somewhat less than one-half (49 collective agreements) had a duration of around 36 months. Ten settlements had durations of 12 months. Twenty-three settlements had durations of 24 months while nine had durations of exactly 48 months. There were 16 settlements that had durations of 54 or more months. Of these, two had a duration of 84 months: Port of Saint John Employers Association, Inc., Saint John, New Brunswick and International Longshoremen's Association; and, Industries Ling inc., Warwick, Quebec and Association du personnel des Industries Ling inc.

Compensation

The innovative elements in compensation appear in 17 agreements. Two electric power utilities offer either a profit or gain sharing plan. Hydro-Québec, province-wide, and Syndicat professionnel des ingénieurs d'Hydro-Québec inc. provides the **profit-sharing** plan where an annual lump-sum payment may grant a maximum of 4.5 per cent of annual wages in 2004, 2005, and 2006. This amount is conditional on the company achieving its corporate and financial objectives. Specifically, 3.0 per cent will be based on corporate objectives being met and the other

1.5 per cent on company profits. Hydro One, province-wide, Ontario, and Canadian Union of Public Employees have a **gain sharing** plan which gives the employees the opportunity for financial reward from improved operational performance. A potential award of 4.0 per cent of base payroll is dependent on corporate performance criteria and business initiatives, each with productivity, safety and customer service targets. This company also offers an **employee share option** plan whereby an employee may purchase up to 5.0 per cent of their base salary in shares on an annual basis. Employees may pay for the shares up front, on an annual basis or through salary deductions. The employer will provide a matching plan of one share for each three shares purchased by the employee. The employer will also cover the cost of brokerage commissions, trustee fees and cost associated with payroll deduction.

Tembec Inc., Cranbrook, British Columbia and Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada have established a **pulp price trigger bonus**. The employer will make a payment of \$500 per employee to the local union for each calendar quarter that the RISI (Resource Information Systems Inc.) reported the NBSK (Northern Bleached Sulfite Kraft) price delivered to the Eastern United States averages over \$1,020 per metric tonne. The bonus will be used to establish a fund for the sole purpose of funding pension bridge benefits from age 60 to age 61. The first three quarterly payments will be directed for this purpose and subsequent payments will be used for the benefit of active or retired employees. Crown Packaging, Richmond, British Columbia and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have a **newsprint**

price trigger bonus with the same employer payments and provisions for pension fund usage as the pulp and paper price trigger bonus mentioned above. The payment here will be based on the RISI Westcoast Benchmark Newsprint price per metre tonne averages over US\$600.

University College of the Fraser Valley Board, Abbotsford, British Columbia and their Faculty and Staff Association have provided **market adjustments** for the faculty with additional payments of \$396 and \$867 added to the maximum two steps of each level respectively. An **economic supplement** plan continues with Atlas Specialty Steels, Welland, Ontario, and Canadian Auto Workers. It provides quarterly bonuses based on hours worked and job level range from 0.299 cents per hour for Job Class 3 to 0.524 cents per hour for Job Class 33.

A **classification adjustment** was implemented by the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba and Canadian Union of Public Employees. Several trades' classifications will have their hourly wage increased by 2.56 per cent. Also, the employer will review the existing apprentice classifications and associated rates to replace them with criteria determining the appropriate number of steps for future positions and the salary rates for such steps relative to the existing minimum rates.

Regional Health Authorities of Manitoba, Community Support Services, province-wide, and Manitoba Government and General Employees' Union have initiated a **wage standardization fund** which will be used to address identified salary inequities. Effective April 1, 2003, an adjustment of 0.6 per cent is applied to all classifications; April 1, 2004, a further 1.0 per cent will be applied to all classifications. Further adjustments will be applied to the Home Care Attendant 2 and Proctor 1, 2, and 3 classifications on the following dates: April 1, 2003, 2.4 per cent; April 1, 2004 and 2005, 1.2 per cent; and April 1, 2006 and 2007, 1.6 per cent.

Two settlements have introduced distinctive incentive plans. P.W. Transportation Ltd., Mississauga, Ontario and P.W. Transportation Drivers' Association have established a **safety incentive** plan. Bus operators may earn up to \$600 per year in recognition of safe driving. Also, the employer and union will meet to develop an incentive program for the customer service representatives. Cara Operations Ltd., Vancouver International Airport, British Columbia and Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union have developed an **attendance incentive** plan. Full-time employees who demonstrate perfect attendance for a given quarter will receive a 50 per cent parking subsidy for the next calendar quarter. Lateness on five occasions in a quarter will not affect the attendance measurement.

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, French Services Division, province-wide, Quebec and Moncton, New Brunswick and Syndicat des technicien(ne)s et artisan(e)s du réseau français de Radio-Canada have introduced a **job re-evaluation** provision whereby 1.0 per cent of the basic payroll will be allocated for the re-evaluation of all occupations.

Allied System (Canada) Company, province-wide, Ontario and Quebec and International Brotherhood of Teamsters have negotiated two **"Me-too" wage parity adjustments**. Wage rates in the first two years of the agreement will be adjusted by the same percentages in the first and second years of the next agreement to be negotiated between Allied Systems and Teamsters located in the United States.

Working Conditions

Crown Packaging, Richmond, British Columbia and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have initiated **flexible work practices** with considerations of training, safety, proper tools for the job and skills required. The maintenance area

will use multi-skilled employees and have complete cooperation between all trades. These employees will receive an additional 95 cents per hour. The operations area will have operators assisting maintenance employees to troubleshoot problems. They will perform minor maintenance without the need of a tradesman and receive an additional 40 cents an hour. **Job flexibility** was also agreed to with Port of Saint John Employers Association, Saint John, New Brunswick and International Longshoremen's Association. Gear and mechanical repair employees will be flexible and perform work for which they are qualified and capable of doing during an assigned work period.

Within their work environment, Walker Exhausts, Cambridge, Ontario and United Steelworkers of America negotiated a "**Hot Weather Plan.**" When working conditions become uncomfortable, humidex readings will be taken in various locations within the plant. Should the reading reach 31°C in one or more locations, a 10-minute heat stress break will commence every hour; 34°C, 15 minutes; and 39°C, 20 minutes. In addition, cool beverages will be made available in all work areas, fans will be provided, and air-conditioned rest areas will be made available during heat stress breaks.

Expertech Network Installation Inc., province-wide, Quebec and Ontario, and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have established **workplace diversity** by undertaking to take part in an employment equity project called "*Women in Non-traditional Jobs.*"

Noranda Inc., Gloucester and Restigouche Counties, New Brunswick and United Steelworkers of America have created a **labour pool** limited to 10 per cent of the bargaining unit. These employees will be used to supplement any shortage of employees within the plant. No labour pool employee will be used if bargaining unit members are on layoff.

The Office of the Auditor General of Canada, Canada-wide and Public Service of Canada have introduced measures to accommodate the employees' need to fulfil **religious obligations**. Employees may use annual leave, compensatory leave, leave without pay, or they can ask for paid leave that they will make up by the equivalent number of hours of work during the following six-month period.

Health and Welfare Benefits

Noranda Inc., Gloucester and Restigouche Counties, New Brunswick, and United Steelworkers of America have introduced an **insurance benefit** plan to cover the company's **seasonal shutdown**. Basic life, accidental death and dismemberment, and prescription drug insurance plans will continue. Although other plans will not apply during the layoff period, the employer will continue to provide emergency coverage, subject to the union's approval of the employees 20 per cent share of premiums. A new **flexible fringe benefit** plan has been negotiated between Expertech Network Installation, province-wide, Quebec and Ontario, and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. Employees will be offered more options including the possibility of buying coverage for additional benefits. Tembec Inc., Cranbrook, British Columbia, and Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada have a provision for the use of **surplus payments** or increased employee contributions to improve benefits. The extra funds will be pooled separately in such a way that the additional benefits paid for by the employees do not impact on the present or future cost of the plan by the employer. DuPont Canada Inc., Maitland, Ontario and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada agree to meet to discuss the possibility of changing the way the **Long-Term Disability** plan is funded to make it a tax free benefit paid by the employees and convert the company premiums saved into flex dollars for the employees.

Job Security

In case of **plant closure**, Crown Packaging, Richmond, British Columbia and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have established a severance package in a lump-sum payment equal to two weeks pay per year of service to a maximum of 52 weeks. Also, the employer will **not contract out** work which directly results in the layoff of bargaining unit members nor contract out work to do the job of employees on layoff or displaced employees working outside of their job category.

Groupe TVA Inc. and Canadian Union of Public Employees have agreed that the employer must notify the union at least six months prior to any proposed **technological change** or modification to the operations that is likely to involve moving employees. When employees must be moved, the employer will assess and develop a program to help the affected employees to upgrade or refresh their skills. Employees who refuse to be retrained may resign with a separation allowance equal to two weeks of wages per year of service up to a maximum of 26 weeks.

Also Uniform and Linen Services Ltd., Vancouver and Nanaimo, British Columbia and Retail Wholesale Union have established a **return to work** provision. Employees who are on worker's compensation leave may return to work and be paid the same salary and benefits that they would receive on the claim. The employee will perform light duties that are agreed to by the return to work committee and the employee's doctor.

Funds and Allowances

The University College of the Fraser Valley Board, Abbotsford, British Columbia and the Faculty and Staff Association **expanded their professional development fund**. Non job-related courses are now paid to a maximum of \$400 per year while first-aid, non job-related language and computer

courses are covered with no annual limit. Also, after the professional development funds have been depleted, an amount of \$30,000 annually will be made available for tuition for Ph.D. or Masters Degrees for faculty employees and \$20,000 annually for staff upgrading courses.

Maple Leaf Foods Inc., Brantford, Ontario and United Food and Commercial Workers International Union have established a **leukemia** fund. The employer will deduct, during each month of May, an amount of \$10 from the employee's salary, subject to authorization of the employee. Such deductions will be matched by the employer and donated to the union's fund.

A flight personnel bonus continues between the Government of Canada, Canada-wide and Canadian Federal Pilots Association. A maximum of \$4,800 per year will be provided as a means of alleviating personnel **recruitment and retention** problems.

L'Université du Québec à Montréal, Quebec and Fédération nationale des enseignantes et des enseignants du Québec have initiated allowances for **participation in committee meetings**. An employee will receive \$35 per hour when attending the following committee meetings: a professional review of teaching qualifications, a review of decisions relating the automatic recognition of teaching qualifications, and a review of teaching assessments.

Training

Because leading edge office technology skills will become a selection criterion for the office group, l'Université de Montréal, Quebec and Canadian Union of Public Employees have introduced training for those employees who wish to **improve their work performance**. The training will be offered on weekends or in the evening and all costs will be covered by the employer. The effect of this training will be to enhance and foster the development of certain skills, make training more relevant, give

employees the opportunity to take charge of their career paths, and encourage them to invest in their own professional development.

The City of Winnipeg, Manitoba and Canadian Union of Public Employees have created a reserve of \$3 million for the purposes of **education, training and staff development** over the duration of the agreement.

A **training/retraining** provision has been introduced by Bombardier de Havilland Inc., Downsview, Ontario and Canadian Auto Workers for employees who have been laid off due to operational restructuring. They will receive a maximum of \$800. Also, office and technical employees who maintain their recall rights are eligible for a maximum of \$1,500 for retraining.

Atomic Energy of Canada Limited, Chalk River, Ontario and various construction unions have set up a **school expense** account for apprentices. An amount of \$125 per week will be made available to cover expenses such as tuition and room and board while apprentices attend courses at a trade school.

Cadbury Trebor Allan Inc., Toronto and Oakville, Ontario and United Food and Commercial Workers International Union have established a **training and education fund**. An amount of \$2,500 will be made available each year of the 36-month agreement. Also, the parties will meet to discuss job training options for **part-time employees** and the procedure for part-time employees to access full-time positions.

Labour-Management Committees

During this second quarter of 2003, 19 of the 53 agreements with innovative practices contained

provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of concerns.

Walker Exhausts, Cambridge, Ontario and United Steelworkers have introduced a committee regarding **modified work for disabled employees**. The committee will develop and maintain a safe and healthy return-to-work policy for the rehabilitation of temporarily and permanently disabled employees. The mandate of the committee will be to consider what work, including overtime, affected employees are able to perform.

A committee concerning **employment opportunities** has been established between Tembec Inc., Cranbrook, British Columbia and Pulp, Paper and Woodworkers of Canada. The committee will develop ways to enhance opportunities through new work arrangements, including reduced overtime and working time alternatives. The parties also implemented committees relating to **job evaluation** and **certified trades training**.

Crown Packaging, Richmond, British Columbia and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada introduced an **improvement leadership** committee. It will develop a strategy to improve safety, productivity, quality and working conditions within the plant. Representatives from both parties will attend training to develop relationship and problem-solving skills.

Other committees included in collective agreements discuss such items as work scheduling, production levels, health and welfare benefit costs, temporary employees' working conditions, and job evaluations.

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