

Innovative Workplace Practices

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This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 72 collective agreement settlements negotiated during the fourth quarter of 2002. Of these, slightly over one-half, 40 settlements, contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

Duration

Of 72 settlements reviewed during the quarter, almost one-half (37 collective agreements) had a duration of 36 months. Five collective agreements had terms of 12 months, while 14 had durations ranging from 24 to 28 months. A further seven settlements had a duration of between 42 and 48 months. The remaining nine had durations of over 50 months. Of these nine agreements, NorskeCanada Limited, various locations in British Columbia, and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada settled seven 60-month renewal agreements at different locations in British Columbia. Another 60-month agreement was settled between Cardinal River Coals Ltd. in Luscar, Alberta, and United Mine Workers of America in Luscar, Alberta.

Compensation

NorskeCanada Limited, various locations in British Columbia, and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have introduced a **newsprint price trigger bonus**. The employer will provide to the local unions an amount of \$500 for each employee per calendar quarter that the RISI Westcoast Benchmark newsprint price per metric tonne averages over \$600 US for that quarter. The bonus will be used to establish a fund to finance pension bridge benefits for employees aged 60 to age 61. The first \$4.1 million will be used for this purpose and any proceeds beyond this amount will be distributed to the local unions who will then determine how these additional funds will be utilized.

A **nickel price bonus** between INCO Limited in Thompson, Manitoba, and United Steelworkers of America states that for any quarter in which the company has net earnings and if the average realized price of nickel is \$2.25 US per pound, each employee will

receive a lump-sum payment equal to 10¢ per hour worked in that quarter. The multiplier used for calculations will be increased by 1¢ for each 1¢ the nickel price exceeds \$2.25 US.

The agreement between Universal Compression Inc., Calgary, Alberta, and International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers has a **performance based incentive program** which provides employees a minimum of 2.0 per cent of earnings if quarterly financial and safety performance measurements are achieved.

Hydro One Inc., province-wide, Ontario and Society of Energy Professionals have a **performance bonus** based on corporate and line of business results with a minimum performance payout of 1.0 per cent of base payroll and a maximum of 4.0 per cent.

Northwestel Inc., territory-wide, Yukon, Northwest Territories and Nunavut, and Northern British Columbia, and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers have negotiated a **team incentive bonus**. The un-pensionable bonus is

based on 50 per cent of profits and 50 per cent on service indicators including how quickly customers are served and answer time. There is a guaranteed 1.5 per cent in the first year and a possible 1.5 per cent in each of the second and third years of the contract.

A **market analysis survey** of all trade classifications has been introduced between University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, and University of Alberta Non-Academic Staff Association. Once the market survey has been finalized, discussions will continue as to the appropriate market supplements to be applied to identified under-compensated positions. Nova Scotia Association of Health Organizations, province-wide, and CAW-Canada have also negotiated a **market-based adjustment** provision. Where the employer determines that, due to labour market shortages, or a recruitment and/or retention problem exists with respect to a bargaining unit classification or classifications, the employer will provide the union with information and proposed wage supplements and time periods. The union will then have the opportunity to make representations and provide additional information. After this consultation, the employer may implement a special market-based adjustment for the affected classifications; pro-rated for regular part-time,

temporary and job-sharing employees. These adjustments will be reviewed annually for possible increases. The Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, province-wide and Health Sciences Association of Saskatchewan have implemented a provincial **market supplement program**. The program will address specific pay-related skill shortages through the use of market supplements to attract and/or retain qualified employees. A supplement will be implemented only when it is necessary to enhance the ability of employers to retain and/or recruit employees with the required skills to deliver appropriate health services.

Wage adjustments in the form of **parity clauses** have been negotiated for the last two years of the ambulance technician's contract with the Government of Quebec, province-wide, and Fédération de la santé et des services sociaux. The adjustments will be identical to those negotiated within the framework for the health and social services sector of the province.

A **deferred salary** leave has been negotiated with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, English Services Division, Canada-wide and Communication Workers of America. Employees can self-finance their own study leave, sabbaticals or any other type of leave by deferring a portion of wages for at least two years and not more than five. The deferred wages will then be paid during the leave period extending between 6 and 12 consecutive months.

Working Conditions

"Reserved Jobs" positions for **permanently disabled employees** have been negotiated between INCO Limited in Thompson, Manitoba and United Steelworkers of America. Certain positions will be identified and forwarded to the joint rehabilitation committee. Employees working in these classifications identified as reserved will not be removed; however, when the job becomes vacant, permanently disabled employees will have the opportunity to move into the job. These employees will be placed in accordance with seniority and their regular job will be protected as a temporary vacancy.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, English Services Division, Canada-wide and Communications Workers of America have introduced **telework** whereby an employee can work at home subject to the conditions that the employer provides the equipment and services the employee needs; employee must have sufficient work space at home; and the employer must pay the employee a monthly allowance to offset the expenses related to the employee's working at home.

The University of Guelph in Guelph, Ontario and Canadian Union of Public Employees have initiated a **temporary reduction workload** provision. Providing that operational requirements are met, a regular full-time employee may be granted a temporary reduction in both workload and compensation to a maximum of 50 per cent. The employee would continue cost-sharing benefits and maintain status within the bargaining unit. Upon completion of the reduced period, the employee would return to a position the same as or equivalent to that which preceded the period. A **reduced workload leading to retirement** has been introduced by the University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta and University of Alberta Non-Academic Staff Association. This program would allow an employee to either work for 1/2 time for two years before retirement, work 2/3 time for three years, or work 3/4 time for four years. During the period chosen, the employee would receive a reduced salary; however, pension contributions and benefits would continue as if the employee was working in a full-time position.

Job Security

In the case of **plant closure**, St. Mary's Cement Company, St. Mary's, Ontario and United Steelworkers of America have introduced a severance pay whereby affected employees receive 5.0 per cent of monthly earnings multiplied by the number of years of service. McGregor Hosiery Mills, Toronto, Ontario and CAW-Canada have also negotiated a provision in the event of closure which states that the employer will pay 50 per cent of the cost of an adjustment committee to assist employees during a maximum of 12 weeks with resumes, job applications and opportunities. St. Mary's Cement Company also has a **lay off security plan** which provides employees additional funds in the form of a savings plan. The employee could receive a maximum of \$200 per week in the event of lay off. The employer will contribute \$1,000 per year to each employee's account.

A **transitional support program** concerning redundant positions has been established between the Nova Scotia Association of Health Organizations, province-wide, and CAW-Canada. Where the number of redundant positions exceeds the number of vacancies, the employer will invite the same number of voluntary severances as excess redundant positions. Voluntary severances candidates will receive four weeks pay per year of service for a minimum of four weeks to a maximum of 52 weeks plus a transition allowance of up to \$2,500 to relocate to employment beyond 50 kilometres or to use as retraining. An employee receiving a layoff notice may also choose this voluntary severance option.

The Canadian Pacific Hotels Corporation, Empress Hotel, Victoria, British Columbia, and CAW-Canada have established a specification to **eliminate all part-time status** and classify all bargaining unit members as full-time employees.

Training

The University of Alberta, in Edmonton, Alberta and University of Alberta Non-Academic Staff Association have negotiated a human resource development program which allows employees to **access learning opportunities**. The employees may improve their performance in their current positions, develop future job-related skills, or access non-credit University of Alberta courses that will enhance employee wellness. A fund of \$400,000 annually will be allocated for this purpose.

Paid training leave related to the **understanding and application of the collective agreement** has been initiated by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, English Services Division and Communication Workers of America. The training will cover topics such as the functioning of joint committees, conflict resolution, grievance settlement and arbitration.

Sécur inc., province-wide, Quebec and Canadian Union of Public Employees have negotiated a provision whereby the employer will pay up to \$250

for **English language courses** for the five most senior employees applying to the position of Quebec City dispatcher.

Labour-Management Committees

During this fourth quarter, 16 of the 40 agreements with innovative practices contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of concerns.

A joint committee with the Regional Health Authorities of Manitoba, province-wide, and Canadian Union of Public Employees has established a **general wage standardization fund**. In order to rectify identified salary inequities, amounts have been allocated as follows: May 1, 2003, \$2,590,000; May 1, 2004 and 2005, \$1,230,000; and May 1, 2006 and 2007, \$1,800,000. Effective May 1, 2003, there will be a minimum standardization increase to all hourly rates of 0.6 per cent. Further standardization adjustments will be effective at mutually agreed dates as decided by the joint wage standardization committee.

An **employment opportunity** committee has been established between NorskeCanada Limited, various locations, British Columbia and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada. Recognizing that the stable employment in the pulp and

paper industry is based on economically viable operations, a high level of labour productivity and quality production, the parties will examine ways to enhance employment opportunities through new work arrangements, including reduced overtime and working time alternatives.

A number of other committees were included in agreements to discuss such items as pension plan, occupational health and safety, health and welfare benefits, job evaluation and workplace issues such as ergonomics and career development.

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