

## INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE PRACTICES

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This overview of workplace innovations is based on a review of 80 collective agreement settlements negotiated during the second quarter of 2002. Of these, close to one half (39 settlements) contained provisions considered to be innovative or of particular interest.

### Duration

Of all settlements reviewed during the quarter, exactly one-half (40 collective agreements) had a duration of 36 months. Nine collective agreements had terms ranging from between 20 and 24 months, while six had duration of 12 months. A further 12 settlements had a duration of between 40 and 48 months. The remaining, 13 had durations of over 50 months. The longest duration was of 82 months between Motor Coach Industries Limited in Winnipeg, Manitoba and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. In the retail industry in Saskatchewan and Ontario, three settlements had durations of 72 months: Real Canadian Superstores, province-wide Saskatchewan; and Extra Foods, Division of Westfair Foods Ltd., Regina and other centres, Saskatchewan and United Food and Commercial Workers International Union; and Loeb Canada Inc., Loeb Lincoln Heights Division, Ottawa, Ontario and CAW-Canada.

### Compensation

A **gain-sharing** plan continues at British Columbia Hydro and Power Authority, province-wide, British Columbia, and Office and Professional Employees International Union with the objective of establishing an incentive framework that will focus all BC Hydro employees, both union and non-union, on specific performance objectives aligned to the success of the organization. The program will be calculated on financial, customer satisfaction and safety improvement measures, and if targets are achieved, will provide a potential pensionable payment of up to 4.0 per cent of annual earnings. Employees may receive the payment in a lump-sum amount or direct it to a registered retirement savings plan. The company has also intro-

duced a **market adjustment** provision for certain classifications where there is a significant and demonstrable recruitment or retention challenge. The adjustments range from 3.0 to 6.0 per cent. The employer, at the union's request, will conduct a wage survey of relevant comparators between January 1, 2004 and March 31, 2004 to determine whether further market adjustments are warranted.

The Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd. and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have a **profit-sharing** provision for the 36-month duration of their contract. The annual lump-sum payments are paid out if the gross profit of the company operations, before taxes, capital depreciation and interest payments, exceeds 15 per cent in the first year, 17 per cent in the second year and 20 per cent in the third year.

Hydro One, province-wide, Ontario, and Canadian Union of Public Employees, will establish an employee **share option** plan whereby employees may purchase up to 5.0 per cent of their base salary in shares on an annual basis. Employees may purchase shares through payroll deductions while 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 costs associated with payroll deduction. Should this plan not become available by the end of 2002, an ongoing gain-sharing plan of 4.0 per cent will be increased to 6.0 per cent for the duration of delay past 2002. If the plan does not become available, the 6.0 per cent will remain ongoing.

A **performance bonus** has been introduced into the agreement between the Government of Ontario and Association of Management, Administrative and Professional Crown Employees of Ontario. Employees, who are at the maximum of their salary scale, will receive a lump-sum bonus based on performance for the previous fiscal year. The amounts will be 3.5 per cent for satisfactory performance and 6.0 per cent for above satisfactory level.

Communications Security Establishment in Ottawa, Ontario and Public Service Alliance of Canada have a **terminable retention allowance** which, for over the life of the agreement, can provide payments ranging from \$2,500 to \$13,838 for the Computer Systems Administration Group and from \$6,000 to \$13,713 for the Engineer Group.

The settlement between Motor Coach Industries Limited, Winnipeg, Manitoba and International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, introduces a new classification arrangement. The structure will incorporate a **two-tier wage** structure and a **consolidated wage progression**. Employees hired after March 22, 2002, will immediately be placed on the new wage grid while the current employees' wage progression will continue according to the existing automatic progression steps until September 30, 2003, at which time they will be placed at the appropriate level of their new classification grid. An employee who, as a result of the consolidation, is placed at a level that is less than they were receiving as of September 30, 2003, will continue to receive the higher rate until such time as the rate assigned on the new wage progression equals or exceeds that rate.

In addition to their current pension plan, Owens-Corning Canada Inc., Edmonton, Alberta, and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, have introduced a **voluntary employee pension plan** which will allow employees to contribute up to 4.0 per cent of annual earnings with the employer matching 50 per cent of the employee contribution. Contributions may be invested in any number of investment options made available by the funding agency operating the plan. Upon plan commencement, the employer will provide an initial payment, on a one-time only basis, to each employee's account. The payment will be the greater of \$500, or the yield achieved when multiplying an employee's years of service as of July 31, 2002 by \$25.

## Working Conditions

The Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto and Canadian Union of Public Employees have introduced **job sharing** whereby requests will not be denied provided that the job share arrangement does not unreasonably interfere with efficient operations. The program will be evaluated on an ongoing basis to assess impact on service to clients as well as on the branch.

Loeb Canada Inc., Ottawa, Ontario, and CAW-Canada have established a **work-life balance** provision whereby a full-time employee who wants two consecutive weekend days off will be given a Saturday/Sunday or a Sunday/Monday off every four weeks whenever possible, as long as the employer can maintain a sufficient workforce for proper operation of the business.

The Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, province-wide, and Saskatchewan Union of Nurses have introduced a **cultural awareness program**. The education seminars, which focus on aboriginal issues, will be provided on an annual basis and paid for by the employer. Every effort will be made to allow employees to attend, or participate in spiritual or cultural observances required by faith or culture. An **enhanced recruitment initiative program** has been established between the Government of Ontario, province-wide, and Ontario Public Service Employees Union to identify and remove barriers to equal opportunity in the Ontario Public Service, recognizing that women, aboriginal persons, persons with disabilities, visual minorities and francophones may face barriers to employment in Ontario.

A trial implementation period of a **compressed work-week** has been negotiated between Pacific Transit Cooperative, Vancouver, British Columbia and Amalgamated Transit Union. The parties have agreed to compress 20 per cent of scheduled shifts into shifts of four days of 9 hours and 22.5 minutes each.

The Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Canada-wide and Public Service Alliance of Canada have introduced a **working conditions study** whereby the employer agrees to provide up to \$300,000 to review the particular working conditions of **term employees**.

## Job Security

Extra Foods in Regina and other centres, Saskatchewan and United Food and Commercial Workers have introduced various **guarantees of hours of work** for full- and part-time employees. The complement of full-time employees will be increased by nine, comprising of seven additional urban agreement employees and two additional rural agreement employees. Also, when a new store opens within any location covered by the agreement, a minimum of 50 per cent of the jobs will be filled by existing employees. For part-time employees, the senior two-thirds of employees will be guaranteed 24 hours per week while the last third will be guaranteed 18 hours per week. In addition, non-

probationary available-anytime employees must be scheduled for no less than 14 hours per week.

## Training

The Pacific Racing Association, Vancouver, British Columbia and Office and Professional Employees' International Union have set up an on-the-job training program in order to **upgrade the skills** of employees so that they may meet the requirements of job postings for which they are not presently qualified.

Other employers have negotiated **funds to pay for the educational needs** of employees. The agreement with Nova Scotia Power Incorporated and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers states that the employer will contribute 2¢ per hour per employee and deduct an additional 1¢ per hour from employees for their fund. Better Beef Limited in Guelph, Ontario and United Food and Commercial Workers International Union concur that the employer will contribute \$1,000 per year to a union administered training and education fund.

In order to assist employees in personal training and development, the Construction Commission of Quebec, province-wide, and Office and Professional Employees International Union have agreed that the employer will lend a maximum of \$3,000 to employees to purchase a **personal computer**, to be repaid over 24 months.

## Funds

The Government of Ontario, province-wide, and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union have established an **innovation** fund to support, recognize and reward the effort of employees in the development of innovative practices. Cash awards will be set up for this purpose. A **social justice** fund has been initiated by Woodbridge Foam Corporation, Woodbridge, Ontario and CAW-Canada whereby the employer will contribute 0.5¢ per hour worked which provides solidarity assistance to non-profit and humanitarian projects within Canada and around the world. The University of Regina and University of Saskatchewan

in Regina and Saskatoon, Saskatchewan and Canadian Union of Public Employees have set up a **job evaluation/pay equity** fund. The employers will contribute 1.0 per cent of regular payroll per year to address concerns within the bargaining unit.

A **financial planning** fund has been negotiated with Canada Customs and Revenue Agency, Canada-wide, and Public Service Alliance of Canada to provide \$400 per year per employee for financial planning advice.

## Labour-Management Committees

During this first quarter, close to a third (12) of the 39 agreements with innovative practices contained provisions for establishing committees dealing with a wide variety of concerns.

A **disability in the workplace and return to work** committee with Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto, and Canadian Union of Public Employees has been established to develop guidelines for accommodation and make recommendations regarding the implementation of a return to work and accommodation of disability program. The parties have also implemented a **central health and safety** committee to review and recommend guidelines to be used as part of regular worksite inspections to assess ergonomics. Also, an ad hoc committee has been set up to examine employee **workload assessment** requests.

The Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd., Toronto, Ontario, and Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada have initiated an **attendance management** committee to control absenteeism and ensure that the program is both effective and fair.

A **workweek review** committee between Toronto Transit Commission and Amalgamated Transit Union is to discuss potential areas for the implementation of 4-day/10-hour shifts.

A number of other committees were included in agreements to discuss such items as team work, shift scheduling, early retirement, pay equity, job evaluation and electronic bulletin boards.

## Innovative Workplace Practices

*Previously published innovative workplace practices from past issues of the Workplace Gazette are available on the Workplace Information Directorate Web site at:*

<http://labour.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca>