



DECEMBER 2024

# RETIRED WORKERS' CHAPTER

## NEWSLETTER



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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Allow me to introduce myself, I am Rick Prudil, and I have been elected as President of the Retired Workers' Chapter and this is my first opportunity to address our RWC membership.

I was employed by OPG as a Control Maintainer/Technician for 35 years, starting at Lennox GS for 4 years and then moving to Nanticoke GS. I was active in the PWU for virtually all those years. This activity culminated in being elected to the PWU Sector 2 Vice President position. Immediately after my retirement in 2011, I was elected as the RWC Vice President for Sector 2. I look forward to being your RWC President.

I hope that all our readers are safe and healthy. Many of you will be either in warmer climates or planning to be on your way soon. For those staying home, we encourage you to enjoy our winter living and activities.

A special welcome to our new members.

As you may know, the majority of RWC members (those who worked for Ontario Hydro Successor Companies) will be receiving a 3% COLA increase to their pensions effective January 1, 2025. As of the time of writing, we do not yet know what the OMERS COLA increase will be. We are fortunate to have this protection. Without it, reduced buying power can result quickly.

A friendly reminder to members who are planning trips. Before departing, we urge you to have insurance to cover you for medical emergencies at a minimum. It is also worthwhile to consider cancellation and trip interruption insurance. It is always a good idea to review your coverage, so you are aware of what coverage you have and who to contact in the event of an issue.

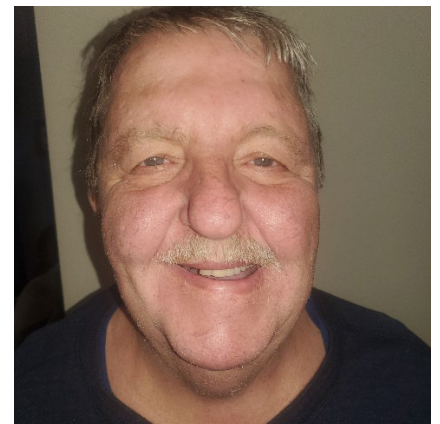
I enjoyed meeting many of you at our Membership Meetings this year. The dates and locations for our 2025 meetings will be posted on our website in the spring and you will also receive a bulletin with all the meeting details.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding our newsletter or the RWC in general, please contact us by phone or by email at [rwc@pwu.ca](mailto:rwc@pwu.ca)

To conclude, on behalf of the RWC, I wish you all good health and safe travels.

In Solidarity,

**Rick Prudil**  
President  
PWU Retired Workers' Chapter



**Rick Prudil**  
President  
PWU Retired Workers' Chapter



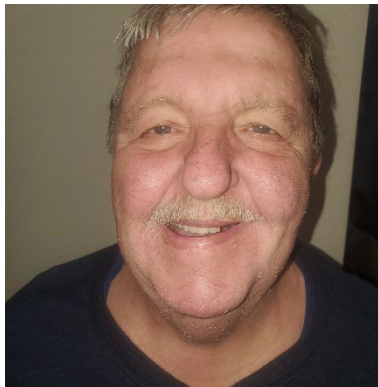
# RETIRED WORKERS' CHAPTER (RWC) EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE CHANGES

The Retired Workers' Chapter Bylaws require that elections of officers take place every four-years.

- This year Peter Kelly (President) retired, and Rick Prudil was elected as the new President.
- Sector Vice Presidents Bert Mitchell (Sector 1) and Adrian Zanchetta (Sector 3) did not run for re-election.
- Maureen Skopeleanos was elected as Vice President for Sector 1.
- David Shier was elected as Vice President for Sector 2 replacing Rick Pudil.
- Danny Farrell was elected as Vice President for Sector 3.
- Nick Allan was re-appointed as Secretary Treasurer.
- Bert Mitchell and Adrian Zanchetta both chose to return to their respective Executive Board positions.

A new Executive Committee will have new ideas to move the RWC forward. Their first meeting will be held in November.

You can contact any of the Executive members at [rwc@pwu.ca](mailto:rwc@pwu.ca) or by visiting the RWC website at <https://www.pwu-rwc.ca/about/#executives>



**Rick Prudil**  
President



**Maureen Skopeleanos**  
Vice President – Sector 1



**Dave Shier**  
Vice President – Sector 2



**Danny Farrell**  
Vice President – Sector 3

# NATIONAL PENSIONERS FEDERATION (NPF)



The RWC is an affiliate of the NPF and participates in their quarterly meetings via Zoom. This organization helps keep our executive up-to-date on issues that affect or may affect our RWC membership in the future.

Some current issues they are involved with are:

- Forum for the Canadian Coalition (CCAA) against Ageism held in Ottawa. NPF membership campaign launch that winds up their United Nations meeting in New York. <https://bit.ly/supportCCAA>
- NPF sent a letter to Senators to support Bill C64, *The Pharmacare Act* without amendments.
- Finance Canada public consultation relating in part to proposed consumer protection enhancements in the banking sector. The federal government is considering some sweeping and potentially very impactful changes to the consumer protection rules relating to fraud prevention and compensation, as well as branch closure requirements and cheque holds, among other subjects. This is an important consultation and the timelines for public response are short. It is important for policymakers to hear your voice.
- You can read the consultation paper here: [Consultation on Proposals to Strengthen Canada's Financial Sector - Canada.ca](#).

If you are interested in more information on the above issues, or wish more information about the NPF, they have launched a new website, any feedback is welcomed. Their newsletter is available for download on their website as well.

[www.nationalpensionersfederation.ca](http://www.nationalpensionersfederation.ca)

## A RETIRED WORKERS' CHAPTER MEMBER'S THOUGHTS

Summer vacations and summer visitors have come and gone. To some, a period of melancholy often follows summer. That includes me! I enjoy all the seasons to some extent, but my favourite is summer. The fall or autumn is a time we take to prepare for the upcoming colder weather that lies in wait as autumn progresses and winter follows.

On the cusp of the autumn is Labour Day. This year the PWU Retired Workers' Chapter (RWC) made its presence felt at the annual Labour Day parade and celebration in Port Elgin Ontario. A donation of \$300.00 was made to the Grey Bruce Labour Council and this assisted greatly in deferring costs with this event. The parade itself had a number of floats and about 1,500 marchers. After the parade, several hundred people attended the lunch at the Unifor Centre. Oh, what a lunch it is each year. All we have to do is show up and the staff at the Unifor Family Education Centre feeds us with more excellent food than most of us can come close to eating. Amongst all this, we get to draw attention to all the good things that labour does.



Being recognized in this public way does not have to be once a year. Thinking just about the autumn there is a very solemn day, November the 11th. Labour Day is a celebration and is full of excitement. Workers, community and families all participate in a holiday-like manner.

Remembrance Day is about veterans, families of veterans, those lost to past wars, those who came home but were never the same, valiant medical corps, and many more associated with service and the Royal Canadian Legion.

Is Remembrance Day a place where organizations such as the RWC could be visible? The short answer is yes. How this is done is the question. Purchasing a wreath or wreaths for placement by an RWC member or members during your local Legion ceremony on the 11<sup>th</sup>. Taking the time to make your way to a local Legion on the 11<sup>th</sup> and in so doing, wearing a PWU jacket tells those in attendance that the PWU remembers. Staying for the coffee or lunch which is often served after the service of remembrance could be the time that the RWC is visible.

The idea of the RWC being present on Remembrance Day is not about taking any attention from this solemn day but is the opportunity to see the RWC as a vibrant and ongoing presence in our communities.

Visibility at any event is about showing the community that the RWC is active in our communities. On Labour Day we celebrate with a vast number of workers. On Remembrance Day we stand with the community and honour and remember. At Christmas, we help with the local parade. In April we stand, again with solemn remembrance of workers who have become ill in the workplace, or who have been killed or injured. No matter if it is marching, remembering, or celebrating, the calendar is full of opportunities to show our community spirit and support.

In previous articles, I have mentioned the volunteerism of the RWC members. Just in case there is anyone reading this article looking for an opening into volunteering, being a participant in anything mentioned in this article could well be the gateway to getting involved.

Please note that Poppy Campaigns are very much a local initiative conducted by Legion Branches in cities, towns, and communities across the country. Donations collected during the Poppy Campaign are held in Trust at the branch level to directly support Veterans and their families within their community and to help ensure Canadians never forget.



**Dave Trumble**

PWU/Bruce Power Retiree

## RETIRED WORKERS' CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS 2025

We had good turnouts this year at all of our meetings. These meetings were held in Hamilton, Kincardine, Port Elgin, Cobourg, Pickering and Renfrew.

Our meetings provide us with a good opportunity to keep our members informed on updates to your Pension Plans, Health Benefit Plans, and other issues of interest for Retirees. Members also have the opportunity to socialize with their retiree friends.

Meetings are held every year in different locations. We plan to repeat them in the same vicinities every 2 – 3 years. We encourage you to attend and ask that you also encourage other PWU retirees to attend. Non-member retirees can sign up online and at the RWC membership meetings.

If you have ideas on how we can improve our meetings, or have topics you wish to have discussed, please let us know via email at [rwu@pwu.ca](mailto:rwu@pwu.ca)

Locations and details for next year's meetings will be posted on our website in the spring, and you will also receive a bulletin in April 2025.





## PASSING OFF THE BATON FROM FALL TO WINTER

What a fabulous extended fall we have been enjoying. Wonderful warm temperatures with lots of sunshine and clear skies. All the local fall fairs have had great weather to hold their events, and the parade routes have been filled with crowds of people enjoying the festivities. Pumpkin patches are full, apple crops are huge, and vegetable markets remain open with lots of fresh produce to fill the Thanksgiving table. I really don't know where the summer went. It seemed to move by extremely fast this year and now here we are into fall; eating turkey and carving pumpkins for Halloween.

Our big Pumpkinfest weekend here in Port Elgin Ontario lucked out with only a short downpour on Sunday morning.



*Bob and Elaine MacKenzie*

One of our Bruce Power retirees, Bob MacKenzie and his wife Elaine, have been growing giant vegetables since 1995. In 1998 Bob and Elaine broke the 1,000 lb mark with their 1,010 lb pumpkin. In 2005 they were recognized by the Guinness Book of World Records for their 1,063.5 lb squash, the first year that the 1,000 lb barrier was broken, and Bob and Elaine entered two squash over 1,000 lb! Only one other grower in the world had a 1,000+lb squash that year. Bob and Elaine not only grow giant squash and pumpkins, they also grow giant cabbage, tomatoes and watermelon. This year, in Port Elgin, they won the cabbage category with a 56 lb cabbage. Bob and Elaine are founding members of the (GVGO) Giant Vegetable Growers of Ontario.



*Photo by Rob Gowan The Sun Times*

Jeff Warner from Englehart, Ontario won the 2024 Port Elgin Pumpkinfest with a 1,966.5 lb pumpkin and set a new site record for this event.

So, after seeing all that information, if you don't know what to do with your spare time during retirement, maybe you could have a future growing giant vegetables.

We usually pick up apples from Reid's Apple Farm just off County Road 40 near Thornbury, Ontario. Each year they have a display of the largest apple from their orchard to the smallest. This year they had a Honeycrisp apple that weighed in at 1.7 lbs. That's a lot of Honeycrisp apple right there!

Ontario's fall season is one of my favourite times of the year. I love to get out for a drive through the countryside and see all the fall colours, the fields being harvested, and buying my yearly supply



of local honey. The trails this time of year are great to walk with less chance of seeing mosquitoes and other flying pests.

So, funny story! Well, at least it's funny now. My wife and I decided to take our 1991 Ford F150 for its last little run of the season. We headed for Tobermory to view the fall scenery and maybe catch a glimpse of the Chi-Cheemaun in her final week of operation for the 2024 season. After touring around Tobermory we felt it would be nice to check out Cyprus Lake and take a stroll out to the Grotto. This area is now run by Parks Canada and it has been upgraded with paved roads, parking areas and even several year-round Yurts that you can rent. So we drove into the park as far as you can go, all the way to P1 (parking lot #1). Now here is where the story gets a little funny.

Our newer vehicle uses a pocket fob that makes leaving your vehicle in a parking lot fairly simple. You just jump out close the door and as you walk away you hear a "Beep" to indicate the vehicle is locked and secure. However, a 1991 Ford F150 does not come with this type of technology, so when you park it and get out you have to physically lock the door before walking away. But, and this is an important But! You have to remove the keys from the ignition first, then get out and lock the doors. Needless to say, I locked the keys in my truck on a chilly breezy day as far into the park as you could be.

There was a bit of panic initially and then I remembered, I have CAA. Yes, there was a cell phone signal so I called CAA and it took the person on the other end of the phone some time to find our location on the map. I was then told that it would be a couple of hours before they could get a service vehicle as it would have to come out of Owen Sound. My wife was not impressed with the situation I had put us in. I had asked a park patron to tell the front gate on his way out that I was expecting a CAA service truck to drop by. When the Park Ranger came by to check on us, my wife asked him if he was armed and when he replied "yes", she promptly ordered him to shoot me!! Of course, he didn't shoot me and we laughed and laughed and suddenly I received a cell phone text from a CAA service truck driver who said his ETA would be 15 minutes. When the CAA flatbed truck arrived he had a Chevy Suburban loaded on the back. He said "man are you ever lucky". I just happened to be picking up this Suburban in Tobermory when I got the call to unlock your truck. Otherwise, it would have been a few hours for me to get up here to help you guys out. Well, it was my lucky day. He had my truck open in a flash and we were good to go. We never did get to see the Grotto since we were a little chilled and felt like we should just enjoy the view from inside the truck. What an adventure and a great story to tell the family. As with each telling, the embellishments seem to get greater and greater.

Anyway, thanks for reading and I hope you enjoy this wonderful fall weather with your family and friends. Let me take this time to wish you and yours a very Merry Christmas and all the best.

Yours in Solidarity,



**Kevin McKay**  
PWU/Bruce Power Retiree

Here is some food for thought. These are some notable dates in the history of Ontario Hydro:

- **June 9, 1902**

The Ontario Hydro Commission was formed to support public ownership and distribution of electricity across the province.

- **May 2, 1911**

Adam Beck, Chairman of the Hydro-Electric Power Commission of Ontario, inaugurated the Toronto Hydro-Electric System, which became Canada's largest municipal electricity distribution company.

- **April 1, 1999**

Ontario Hydro ceased operations and was restructured into five separate entities, including Ontario Power Generation and Ontario Hydro Services Company.

## WHO'S IN YOUR FAMILY?

May 2007. My mom had passed away from Alzheimer's. We had a memorial service for her and I put an obituary in the paper with my email address in case anyone wished to send condolences. A week after the service I received an email "BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU". My first thought was that someone thought we were wealthy and they were coming out of the woodwork to claim an inheritance.

### Not so.

It happened to be the daughter of a good friend of my mom's. (Her mom had also passed away). She wanted to meet me as she had some information for me. We set up a visit and at that meeting, I found out from her that "YOUR MOM HAD A BABY BEFORE YOU WERE BORN. HER NAME WAS NANCY C... YOUR MOM WAS MARRIED TO HER FATHER JOHN C..."

She had saved baby pictures of Nancy that were taken at a professional studio and she gave them to me. This couldn't be possible. Or could it? My mother was married to someone else before she married my father? She had a baby? Where did the baby go?

I couldn't ask my parents as they had both died. I called my Uncle and he confirmed it. In fact, a number of people knew about it and they all said "your mom would have killed us if we had told you". I was devastated. How could she keep this from my brother and me? We had a half-sister somewhere in the world? How would I ever find her? Did I want to find her?

I decided to start looking for her. I sent away for my "long" birth certificate which has far more details than on the short card. When I checked it, my mother had indicated that I was her first child and she had no previous children.

### Dead end.

I put a couple of ads in the paper along with memorials to my parents asking if anyone knew Nancy C... born to John C..., approximate year of birth and born in Toronto. I put feelers out on Facebook. I sent my DNA to 23 and me and also to Ancestry. I also placed Nancy's name in my profile and indicated that I was looking for her.

### Nothing.

Fast forward September 2024. A woman contacted me through 23 AND ME and said my niece and I showed up on her DNA as close relatives. She had just joined 23 AND ME because both her mother (Nancy) and her father were adopted and she wanted to find family roots. She also saw my information on my profile and she said her mom's name was Nancy and everything else added up except for the birthplace.

My first thought was – dead end again. I was positive that my mom lived in Toronto and that Nancy was born in Toronto. Nancy's daughter and I decided to connect and have further chats to see if in fact her mom was my half-sister Nancy.

Turns out that Nancy was born in Quebec and not in Ontario as I had thought. Nancy was given up for adoption at an early age. She had her birth certificate and her baptism certificate and she sent me copies. There it was in black and white – her father John C... and my mother Irene C... They were indeed married and lived in Quebec. The dates added up and it was definitely my mom's signature on the baptism certificate.

Nancy lives in Powassan. Nancy has never submitted her DNA and has no desire to do so. She was raised by her family who eventually adopted her at age 18. We have exchanged pictures, emails, phone calls and other information. We are planning to get together before the snow flies.

I have such mixed feelings. While I am glad that I was finally able to connect with Nancy, I am overwhelmed and hurt by the fact that she was given up for adoption and hidden from my brother and me all these years.

I will never know any of the reasons why Nancy was given up, but I am thrilled that I am finally going to meet my half-sister face to face.

DNA anyone? Who's in your family?



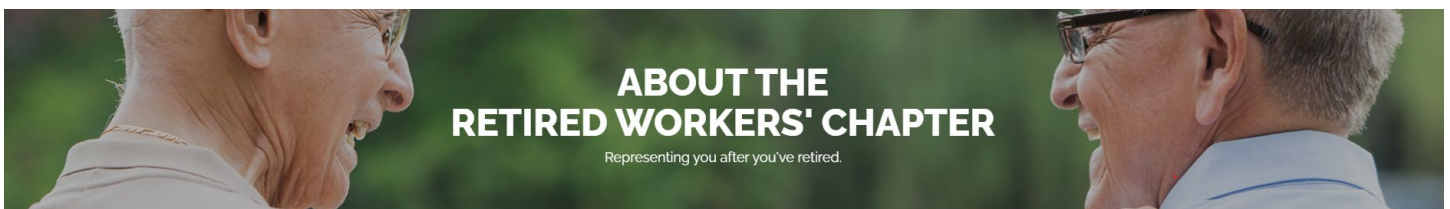
**Dorothy Couvier**

Retired PWU Staff Officer

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION/ADVICE DOCUMENTS

The Retired Workers' Chapter, over the past few years, has provided helpful information for members via our newsletters. Over time, we tend to forget about these items but may have a need for this information. To remedy this, we will soon be posting them on our website.

If you have any suggestions for other information that you would like to see on our website please contact us by email at [rwcm@rwcm.ca](mailto:rwcm@rwcm.ca)





## RWC MEMBER ENCOUNTER WITH HYDRO ONE WORKERS ON HIS TRIP TO FLORIDA

On our recent trip to our winter home in Florida, we had a rewarding experience. We randomly booked a Holiday Inn while at a gas station North of Cartersville, Georgia.

When we pulled off Highway 175 to the service road to the hotel we saw that the parking lot was 80% full of Hydro line trucks. Making a quick scan around the parking lot we observed that all the trucks were from Hydro One. On our way to check in we noticed that a few Hydro workers were in the parking lot chatting as they checked their trucks and gear.

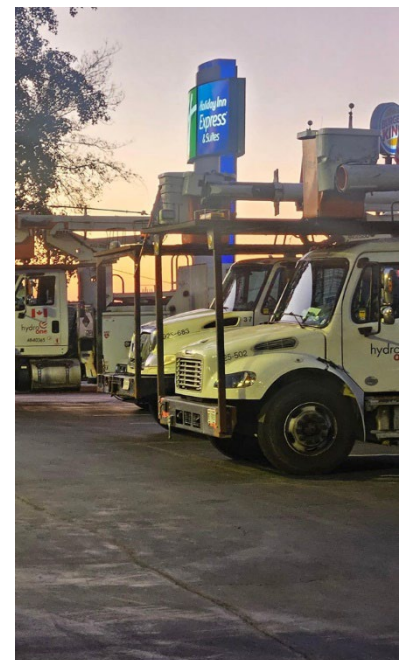
We checked in and were making our way to our room when we met one younger guy with a baseball cap and a blaze orange shirt on who greeted us with a smile and said hi, nice night, as he headed to the parking lot. I dropped our bags and headed back out to the parking lot and made my way to one of the groups by a tandem bucket truck by the main doors of the hotel, I said hello and thanked the workers for their service. They all stopped chatting and said hi and thanks. I asked how their trip was going and if they were working close by. One of the workers said we are on our way home after 14 days, working in Florida. I then said that's great and sorry to bother you but I had to come over and thank you workers for your service in helping with the power restoration in Florida. I informed them that I was a long-serving PWU Chief Steward and I likely instructed some of them at the Union Hall in our JHSC training before I retired. I then told them that I was from Port Elgin and the lad, who we met in the hall while checking in, replied he was from Lucknow about 40 minutes from our hometown.

We chatted for a few minutes and he mentioned that they were a tired bunch and glad to have been able to help out with the power restoration in Florida as a result of the hurricane. They said that they would be glad when they got home on Saturday (two more days).

They said that they needed the rest overnight as the trucks - he patted the tandem we were standing beside - ride like lumber wagons. He also said it had been a tough ride that day as they headed home as it took them almost six hours to get through Atlanta. As a result, they wouldn't be home Friday night as planned.

As one who drives an SUV, I was thinking about those workers driving long highway hours, rumbling along in their hydro line trucks while the governor held them at 65mph or less. This adds extra hours and fatigue both ways - to an already body-challenging trip.

Then, considering them working in Florida for long hours each day in horrible conditions in the heat and humidity. They were also faced with the destruction of infrastructure everywhere you turn and yet, I could see the satisfaction on their faces. Despite their weary appearances they still had smiles and pride on their faces knowing they did their part in helping Florida return power to their customer's one service at a time.



It was a very humbling experience for me and, at the same time, I felt significant pride knowing our PWU brothers and sisters answered the call, equipped with the training, knowledge, and caring to serve the public to safely keep the lights on not only for Ontario but also Florida and all our neighbours and friends in the United States.



**Sheldon Speedie**

PWU/OPG Retiree and Chief Steward

## TRAVEL DISCOUNT FOR RETIRED WORKERS' CHAPTER (RWC) MEMBERS

The RWC has arranged with **STAFFORD TRAVEL AGENCY** for RWC members to receive a discount when booking vacation packages and flights.

Discounts will be as follows – 4% on vacation packages and a flat service charge of \$25.00 for flights.

To receive a discount contact **John Stafford** at **416 305 2921** or [staffordtravel@sympatico.ca](mailto:staffordtravel@sympatico.ca) and identify yourself as an RWC Member.

Stafford Travel has served the travel needs of the POWER WORKERS' UNION for over 60 years.

## DISCOUNT HOME & AUTO INSURANCE PRICES FOR PWU RWC MEMBERS

The broker we have arranged this program with will provide the following savings:

- 10% savings with the group plan
- 5% additional savings for CAA Members

In the past this was Vachon Insurance which has now changed to:



5468 Dundas St. W. Toronto, ON M9B 6E3  
Office: (416) 239-3373 | Toll-Free: 1 (800) 766-8662

Contact the agent below and **identify yourself as a PWU RWC Member** to receive the discount.

**Westland Agent: Craig Stewart**

416-902 2189

[cpstewart49@gmail.com](mailto:cpstewart49@gmail.com)

# LABOUR UNIONS STARTING TO SUPPORT NUCLEAR POWER

Many RWC members will recall that for many years the labour movement was reluctant to support nuclear power for the production of electricity. There was actual broad opposition to nuclear power. The PWU lobbied many Unions and general labour organizations such as the Ontario Federation of Labour seeking support for nuclear power with little to no success.



In 1993 the PWU was one of the major unions that formed the Canadian Nuclear Workers Council (CNWC). The mandate of the council was to protect jobs in the nuclear industry and to garner support for nuclear power and the unionized jobs within the industry. The Canadian nuclear industry is very highly unionized. A cross-section of some of the unions in the industry The workers are represented by the PWU, Society of United Professionals (SUP), IBEW, United Steele Workers (USW), UNIFOR, Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC), International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF), and Building/Construction Trades plus many more. There are 40-plus local unions involved in the industry.

Nuclear power for the production of electricity is gaining support due to climate change issues and the growing demand for electricity. Support is also increasing due to the years of diligent work in advocating and educating workers by the CNWC and unions in the industry.

Many RWC members over the years, worked with the PWU and CNWC to inform trade unions and the public of the benefits, good jobs, clean energy, medical benefits and good research created by the industry.

The first labour groups outside of the involved unions in the industry to start to provide support were some of the District Labour Councils in Ontario.

The years of effort produced a tangible change. Unions affiliated to the CNWC were successful in having the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) unanimously pass a policy resolution supporting nuclear power at their last convention in 2023. In October 2024, CNWC affiliated unions were successful in having the Saskatchewan Federation of Labour also pass a policy resolution unanimously in favour of supporting nuclear power.

With Small Nuclear Reactors (SNR) as well as large nuclear units being on the horizon in Canada the CNWC has still much work to do. There naturally will be many groups who will be opposed to nuclear power and they will be lobbying unions and other groups and organizations to support their anti-nuclear cause. This "not in my backyard" or NIMBY attitude plays out in politics and in front of the Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission.

In their own circles, PWU RWC members can play a part in strengthening this acceptance. This can be done by simply talking favourably about Nuclear Power and the industry in general. This simple action can do amazing things in communities as we move to more and more acceptance of nuclear power and ever-increasing need for nuclear power to supply electricity.

For more information visit the CNWC website at [www.cnwc-cctn.ca](http://www.cnwc-cctn.ca)



## ARE YOU PLANNING A TRIP OUTSIDE OF CANADA

On October 25<sup>th</sup>, the Government of Canada posted a bulletin advising travellers to ensure their passports are **valid for at least six months after their** departure date from Canada.

The six month rule is now a standard entry requirement in over 70 countries. This rule also gives travellers a buffer if their stay is unexpectedly extended or they need extra time for a safe return. It also ensures that even if a passport holder encounters unexpected circumstances—like health issues, flight cancellations, or emergencies—they'll have enough time on their passport to remain in the country legally until they can safely leave.

Service Canada encourages travellers to check their passport validity based on the destination's entry and exit requirements which may include a minimum validity period. The passport must meet those requirements.

For more information on travel advice and advisories go to:

[Travel advice and advisories - Travel.gc.ca](https://travel.gc.ca)



# THE PWU RETIRED WORKERS' CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

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## QUESTIONS? SUGGESTIONS? CONTACT US:

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