

# TRADES BULLETIN

The Ontario government asked former Deputy Minister of Labour Tim Armstrong to study apprenticeship and regulation of the skilled trades. His report was released this summer and was the subject of OCHU's last Trades Bulletin, available on our website. Mr. Armstrong spoke at the first CUPE Trades Conference about his findings.



## First Ontario Trades Conference Trades Want a National Conference

Tradespeople from the public sector ( 60 from hospitals ) attended the first CUPE Ontario Trades Conference, in November.

The trades discussed apprenticeship, including how applicants are selected and compensated. OCHU Trades Chair Ken Bethune spoke about the pilot apprenticeship program at Kingston General Hospital.

Delegates decided not to support a College to regulate trades but agreed that the status quo is not working.

Delegates called for action on the contracting-out of trades work and called for strategies to bring work that is contracted out back in house.

Delegates called on CUPE to do calculations about the real cost of contracted-out trades work.

Delegates called for a national trades conference and for CUPE Ontario to have an annual trades conference and to set up a provincial Trades Council.

The conference called for the union to help trades to get more involved in their local unions.

The call went out for CUPE to work closely with other unions to advocate for and advance the interests of the trades.

And delegates took up the challenge to band together and use their diverse skills to help people in other countries faced with poverty or natural disaster by helping them to build homes or schools.

# BC Hospital Union Leads Trades Jobs Standardized Modernized

## Trades benchmark review completed in British Columbia Hospitals

After discussions and negotiations that began in May 2007, members of the joint Hospital Employees Union ( HEU ) and employer trades classification committee have agreed to revise 17 of 24 benchmarks, as well as create two new benchmarks in the trades job family.

Effective December 1, 2008, positions within the trades classification will be reviewed and adjusted to match updated or new benchmarks.

Dozens of HEU trades workers participated in the benchmark review through conferences, written input and through direct presentations to the employer.

HEU secretary-business manager Judy Darcy congratulated the committee members and all who contributed for their hard work and persistence.

“This process has brought 20-year-old trades benchmarks in line with today’s modern health care institutions and equipment,” says Darcy.

“These changes are important for HEU members and for the effective delivery of patient services.”

In addition to the 17 revisions, the refrigeration mechanic and air condition mechanic have been combined into a single benchmark called refrigeration/air conditioning (R/AC) mechanic. And the head refrigeration mechanic and the head air conditioning mechanic have been combined into the head refrigeration/air conditioning (R/AC) mechanic.

The HEU and the employers also agreed to create two new benchmarks, millwright and head millwright, and to delete three benchmarks, plasterer and head plasterer, as well as head laundry mechanic.

In standardizing trades job descriptions and compensation the Hospital Employees Union points the way forward for us in Ontario healthcare facilities.

Full details of the benchmarking, including the job descriptions can be found on the website of the Hospital Employees Union.