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Provincial Employees Ratify New Three-Year Contract

Members of the largest unionized group of workers in Prince Edward Island have voted to accept a new three-year collective agreement. The members of the Civil Service, Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission and the Workers Compensation Board bargaining units ratified the deal in a vote tabulated at the offices of the P.E.I. Union of Public Sector Employees on Friday June 27, 2008.

The agreement includes wage increases of 3 percent each year for an accumulated increase of 9.3 percent over the three-year term. The agreement also contains many improvements to allowances including; mileage / travel, meals, tools, standby, vacations, maternity / parental leave, and the addition of a new article recognizing the service of long-term employees.

Although the majority of members voted to accept the agreement the strong 'NO' vote is indicative of the many members who feel that the Employer failed to address the issues that are pertinent to their occupations. "Members of the Department of Transportation and Public Works have expressed their frustration with both their department management and the Government for failing to address the issue of wage parity between workers employed with the City of Charlottetown and Provincial Government," states UPSE President, Shelley Ward. "The Employer is well aware of the wage disparity that exists within the Civil Service. Workers in the private sector enjoy superior wages in the majority of job classifications."

"PEI is continually losing skilled trades workers and equipment operators to the private sector and to provinces like Alberta where they are paid a wage that will allow them to support themselves and provide for their families. The Government is very shortsighted if it does not recognize the value of the work these members provide and the need to reward them with a wage that is, at the very least, equal to that received in the private sector. UPSE will continue to lobby the government to address this issue," concludes Ward.

The new agreement is in effect until March 31, 2010