

Greetings Brothers & Sisters,

The last three weeks have not only made a permanent mark in history, it has also disrupted everyone's normal way of life. In the last three weeks we have seen the number of Covid-19 cases go from 1283 in the USA alone to over a quarter million. The US Government is currently predicting that between 100-200,000 Americans will die in that country alone. At the current survival rate that would mean that approximately 5-10 million Americans will become infected based on the WHO mortality rate of 2%. In Canada we currently have just over 11,000 cases. This is the number that the USA had a mere 18 days ago. Of course, we can not assume that we will be hit as hard as the States, but we can also not guarantee that we won't.

As I have mentioned earlier, we have worked diligently to get the office staff, reps & agents' setup to work from home so that we can assist our members while continuing the work of the hall. I would like to personally say thank you to our staff and elected members for the work you have done during this time. Our management team has been having daily conference calls exchanging ideas and formatting a plan going forward in these uncharted waters. The managers, agents and reps have been holding daily afternoon conference calls where we have been making each other aware of what is taking place within the various areas as well as the variety of changes that are taking place between Contractors.

We all know that this current situation is extremely serious and as a result changes have had to be made in an expeditious manner. Our union hall has been closed to the public as of March 12th. Budget cuts have been made in the office to alleviate our expenses while maintaining necessary services to our membership. Union related events have been postponed until further notice and mass layoffs have happened within the offices and the field.

The Alberta Government has stated that we fall under the Essential Service category. While this is something that we have always known, what does this mean for us going forward? Essentially it means that we are expected to go to work and do our job. That being said, there are expectations that we as Union Workers expect. Our first concern is the safety of our membership. We have received a commitment from our Contractors that they will be doing their due diligence in keeping the worksites safe. Hand

wash/sanitizing stations, take away food, social distancing, changes to shifts, and health restrictions entering sites. We know that this is not ideal, however in these times, not much is. If any member feels unsafe due to the Corona virus situation, it is within your right to request a layoff. While we are not encouraging anyone to leave site unnecessarily, we also do not want any member to work in an unsafe environment.

As we are doing what is possible at this point, we understand the fear and frustration of the situation. I encourage all members to frequently check the website for updated information as this is a great resource. If additional information is required, please call the Hall to be directed further. Also be aware that changes have been made to our phone service when calling.

I would like to thank you for your patience and reassure you that anything that can be done is being done at this time.

Fraternally Yours



Rod McKay  
4/6/2020