

# THE Accent

Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees

## Weeklong Educational

The following courses are being offered to PEI UPSE members through a weeklong educational: *X,Y or Boomer? Talking between generations in the Union* and *Campaign Organizing*.

The Canadian Labour Congress Atlantic Region, in conjunction with the Labour College of Canada, is offering the educational which will take place at the Memramcook Institute in St. Joseph N.B. during the week of April 18-23, 2010.

Interested PEI UPSE members should complete an application form ([www.peiupse.ca](http://www.peiupse.ca)) and return it to the UPSE office by March 12, 2010 at 4:00 p.m. Applications will be reviewed and selected participants will be notified.



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Fax: 902-569-8186, Email: [peiupse@peiupse.ca](mailto:peiupse@peiupse.ca)

## Call for Observer

*Master Trust - Civil Service Superannuation Fund*

PEI UPSE is calling for a member to sit as an observer on the Master Trust committee of the Civil Service Superannuation Fund. This role involves attending meetings as an observer (non voting) and representative for the union. If you are interested please call the PEI UPSE office and submit your name by March 1, 2010.

## Safety Award *Douglas MacMaster*

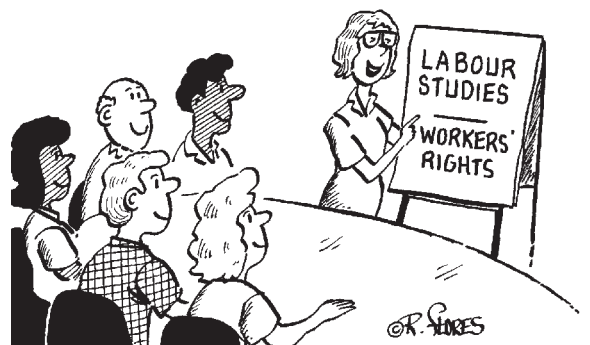
The award is designed to celebrate individual or team achievements by government employees in the promotion and development of health and safety. The nomination deadline is March 12, 2010.

Please email Karen Thomson at [KJTHOMSON@gov.pe.ca](mailto:KJTHOMSON@gov.pe.ca) for further information.

## CLC One Day Educational

*Steward III: The Steward as Leader* and *Collective Bargaining* are being offered by the CLC in conjunction with the Federation of Labour on March 8, 2010 at the Rodd Charlottetown. To register please call the PEI UPSE office by 4:00 p.m. on February 24, 2010. Please note that as per union policy members must have completed the Welcome to UPSE course before attending any other educational.

*Spaces are limited and all applicants may not be accepted.*



The Accent is an internal publication of the Prince Edward Island Union of Public Sector Employees. Comments, questions, concerns and suggestions should be sent to: Mark Barrett, UPSE Communications and Campaigns Officer at [mbarrett@peiupse.ca](mailto:mbarrett@peiupse.ca).

Note to members distributing The Accent:

Because the material contained in this publication is often of a time-sensitive nature, please post or distribute it as soon as possible.

*UPSE is proud to represent over 5000 members in the public and private sectors.*

## Two Tier Minimum Wage ?

Our Union is firmly against the Province establishing a minimum wage system that allows for lower wages for inexperienced workers, students and/or workers earning tips. Such changes to the wage rate are unnecessary and only serve to allow businesses to pay already low wage earners even less. The proposed changes are an unconscionable attack on the most vulnerable segment of the Island's labour force.

***"A two-tiered minimum wage system is unfair, unjust and mean-spirited. In short, Island workers deserve better."***

Shelley Ward,  
President, PEI UPSE

The proposed system creates administrative complexities that are wholly unnecessary. What is clear about a two-tiered minimum wage system is that it discriminates against workers, de-values workers, is open to abuse by employers, presents challenges in recruiting and retaining workers and defeats the purpose of a minimum wage.

In 2008, 5.6% of workers in P.E.I. were working for minimum wage or less (Statistics Canada, 2009, Minimum Wage). The current minimum wage in P.E.I. is \$8.40, the third lowest minimum wage in the country. Statistics Canada (2009, Payroll employment, earnings and hours) data further shows that average weekly earnings in P.E.I. are the lowest in the country. The average weekly earnings in P.E.I. in 2009 were \$697.11. Average weekly earnings in N.S. were the next lowest at \$736.31. The remaining Atlantic Provinces had average weekly earnings of \$757.88 (N.B.) and \$801.62 (N.L.). Instituting a sub-standard minimum wage for some workers would only serve to exacerbate the poor situation low-wage earners in this Province already find themselves.

Our Union firmly believes that the Province should focus its efforts to ensure that every Islander earns a livable wage and maintains

a certain standard of living. A two-tiered minimum wage system does not accomplish either goal. Continuing to pursue such an objective is a reprehensible and shameful attack on low-wage earners.

A two-tiered minimum wage is not the type of change to the minimum wage that would be most beneficial, effective or productive for the Island. Our Union strongly believes that the Province should re-focus its efforts on establishing a livable minimum wage for all Islanders.

*President Shelley Ward (PEI UPSE) will deliver a presentation to the Standing Committee on Community and Intergovernmental Affairs as part of the consultation process on different minimum wage rates.*

## Islander Day

Islander Day was first introduced in Prince Edward Island in 2009. It is a paid (statutory) holiday with most workers entitled to take the day off with regular pay. Some businesses like restaurants, convenience stores and tourist attractions remain open.



*Islander Day is the third Monday of February. It is the perfect chance to spend some extra time with your family.*

## National Labour Code

**February 17, 1944**

Pressure from the Canadian labour movement resulted in Canada's first national labour code. Unions won legal recognition and compulsory collective bargaining. The federal law provided for legally recognized certification procedures, prohibitions against unfair practices by employers, regulation of strikes and lockouts and legally-sanctioned systems of grievance arbitrations.