



A new beginning: OE987 staff members give their impressions of the new facility



Janice Chase
Business
Representative

“I know a lot of my members will benefit from us being in this location. All my members are out of town. None of them are in the perimeter so coming into town and to this office will definitely be easier for them.”



Russ Shewchuk
Director of
Membership
Services

“It’s a great space that has room to grow not only for our local union but training as well. It’s a very inviting place and I think it will make all of our members proud when they see it. As members, it belongs to them.”



Belinda
Blanchard
Area Coordinator
Local 987 C & D

“This building has a lot to offer in terms of aesthetics. The meeting spaces are bright and airy with lots of natural light, they’re roomier, and the entire place has a nicer feel to it.”



Rob Middleton
Membership
Services
Representative

“I am brimming with a sense of pride and enthusiasm as to the future of the organization.”



From There to Here

A look back at the previous locations of the OE987 offices

by Jim Murphy
with notes from Larry Wright



As many of you know, Local 987 is the result of a merger between two Locals of the IUOE: 827 and 901 which were chartered in 1948 and 1958 respectively. Here are some of the places they've occupied in years past.

Local 901's first office was in the Confederation Building downtown on Main Street. Don't get the wrong idea here. Although this building looks majestic, this was the 1950s and the union was still in its infancy. We occupied a one-room office that was all of 300 square feet on the fourth floor at the back of the building.



Local 901 then moved to an office on the second floor of 1080 Wall Street. In the above picture, you can distinguish where the office was located by the two windows on either side of the ladder. They occupied this 500 square-foot office for most of the 1960s.

Local 901
1967-1973

Local 827
1973-1999



Local 901 then purchased this 1000 square-foot building located at 998 Sargent Avenue in 1967. Local 901 soon moved from 998 Sargent Avenue to 1008 Wall Street.

Local 827 (the Stationary Branch) had a very small membership for their first 20-odd years as they represented only Power Engineers. There was no Business Manager during this time, only a President, and he ran the union out of his home. In the early 1970s, Local 827 began organizing trades groups starting with the trades at Misericordia and grew large enough to support a Business Manager. At this time they moved to a small office on Broadway Avenue. Local 827 then purchased 998 Sargent from Local 901 when 901 moved to 1008 Wall, and used half the space for its offices, and rented out the other half. As 827 grew larger, a Business Rep was hired and all of the space at 998 Sargent was occupied by the Union. Local 827 used 998 Sargent as its offices until the merger with Local 901 in 1999 at which time Local 827 staff moved into 1008 Wall Street and both unions fell under the new designation of Local 987.

Locals 901 & 827 Merge in 1999, become Local 987

Local 987
1999-2010



The 4800 square foot building that Local 987 recently vacated had been re-configured numerous times to accommodate the expansion of both union and training staff. Following the 901/827 merger, an addition was built that increased the total square footage of 1008 Wall Street to approximately 6000.

Much like our current 244 Cree Crescent location, 1008 Wall Street was a bigger facility than we needed when we moved in. When we left 11 years later, it was because we had physically run out of space. Our old hall only fit 45 people comfortably, whereas our new building has a hall that will accommodate 200.

When this union was just starting out in the 50s and 60s, I don't think that back then anyone would have dreamed we'd be moving into the state of the art facility we occupy presently. If you'd like to compare, there's a picture of our new building on the front page of this newsletter.

I would like to issue a challenge to the new and younger members to keep the union moving forward. The people who joined this union back in the 50s and 60s could never have envisioned we'd be where we are today. If we keep this union strong and steadily growing, who knows where we might end up 50 years down the road.

In Solidarity,
Jim Murphy , Business Manager



Combined Effort

Local 987 Scores Victory on St. Joseph Wind Farm Project

If you've done any cross-border shopping lately, you've most likely seen the wind turbines being erected near the highway just as you pass the town of Letellier, Manitoba. Their glistening white paint and pointed blades make them impossible to miss as you drive South on highway 75. It might interest you to know that Local 987 has members employed on the project, but getting them there wasn't exactly a breeze.

The efforts to have the work on the St. Joseph Wind Farm Project come under Local 987's Industrial Mechanical agreement were put into motion when the project was first announced in May of 2009. Business Manager Jim Murphy contacted representatives from Mortenson to encourage them to negotiate a collective agreement for the St. Joseph Project. Unfortunately, those efforts proved futile.

"Things didn't work out like we hoped they would in the beginning, but we weren't about to give up," says Murphy. "The reason this whole effort was so important is because Mortenson needed to know that Local 987 had qualified members that were motivated to work under a collective agreement."

In February, Murphy met with General President Vincent J. Giblin and General Vice President and Business Manager of Local 49 (which covers Minnesota--Mortenson's home state) Glen Johnson. The purpose of the meeting was to enlist their support in trying to get Mortenson to come to the bargaining table.

After months of waiting, it became clear that Mortenson was in no hurry to meet, so Murphy decided to try another strategy. He met with Russ Shewchuk, Local 987 Director of Membership Services to discuss ways the union could put pressure on Mortenson. After weighing all the options, it was agreed that if Mortenson would not negotiate a Collective Agreement, Local 987 would picket the job.

The opportunity arose when Local 987 became aware that Mortenson was going to hold a job fair in St. Joseph, Manitoba. Shewchuk, with the help of Membership Services Representatives Rob Middleton and Mark White, started to plan a picket line (see details outlined in local newspaper article on facing page). The picket would take place at a job fair Mortenson was holding on May 5th & 6th, 2010. Approximately 25 union members tied on picket signs and marched in front of the community centre in St. Joseph.

"The reason this whole effort was so important is because Mortenson needed to know that Local 987 had qualified members that were motivated to work under a collective agreement."

- Jim Murphy

The representatives from Mortenson who were present at the job fair were somewhat surprised and in some ways supportive of the Union's efforts, but were in no position to speak on behalf of Mortenson Management. Local 987 felt that the people going to the job fair needed more information, so Middleton, Shewchuk, White and the union members in attendance handed out pamphlets and spoke to the locals about wages & benefits if the project were to be built union.

In the weeks and months that followed, the informational picket line, pressure from General President Giblin, Local 49 Business Manager Johnson, and Local 987 Business Manager Murphy paid off. Representatives from Mortenson agreed to fly to Winnipeg and negotiate

a collective agreement for the St. Joseph Wind Farm Project. Negotiating on behalf of Local 987 were Business Manager Murphy and Business Representative Patrick Campbell. With the combined efforts from all levels of the IUOE from the General President to the rank & file members, Local 987 concluded a Collective Agreement with Mortenson on August 20, 2010.

This was truly a team effort that involved all levels of the IUOE in a truly top-down/bottom-up approach that paid off.

Jim Murphy would like to thank General President Giblin, Vice President Johnson, Local 987 staff and a special thanks to all the members who gave their time to support this effort.

The Red River Valley Echo

by Greg Vandermeulen
Appeared in the Red River Valley Echo May 14, 2010.
Reprinted with permission.

Union pickets wind farm job fair

Between 15 and 25 union members held what they call an informational picket outside the St. Joseph Community Centre during the two-day job fair hosted by Mortenson Construction for the upcoming wind farm project.

The members were protesting what they called an unfair decision by Mortenson to pay non-union wages to some workers.

The members of the Operating Engineers of Manitoba Local Union No. 987, stood to the side of the doorway, handing out a single page of information to people walking in to or leaving the job fair.

The paper outlined what they called "corporate greed at the expense of Manitoba Hydro ratepayers." It highlighted the \$260 million MB Hydro loaned Pattern Energy, and showed the chain where Pattern Energy hired Minnesota based Mortenson Construction as general contractor. They in turn subcontracted work out to Borneke Construction (also Minnesota based), who then sub contracted the earth moving part to Plum Coulee's JK Wiebe Construction.

The problem according to membership services rep Rob Middleton is that although Borneke pays \$32-\$33 per hour with a benefits package worth another \$14.50, JK Wiebe Construction only pays \$18 per hour.

"Where's the money going?" the union asks on their literature. "These contractors are cheating the workers of Manitoba by stealing money and benefits from our wallets to line their pockets. This is not fair!"

Middleton said Mortenson has paid union wages and benefits in the past on other projects.

He said they were at the job fair to help the local employees as well. "It's not about the union wanting all the jobs and local people losing out," he said. "We're trying to make sure local people get a fair shake."



Pictured L-R: Director of Membership Services Russ Shewchuk, Membership Services Reps Rob Middleton and Mark White.



Dam Fine Job

A Profile on Local 987 Batch Man Don Bullen



800 kms north of Winnipeg near Thompson the rumble of concrete trucks can be heard on an hourly basis, often 24 hours a day. This is the site of the Wuskwatim Hydroelectric Dam, Manitoba Hydro's latest attempt to turn the natural flow of water into electricity. Once completed, the dam will be able to produce 220 megawatts of juice, enough to power over 200,000 homes. Right now, the dam is approximately 95% of the way through the construction phase.

Dams of this magnitude are made possible by a special blend of sand, water, admixtures, cement and aggregates that form what we know as concrete. Lots of concrete. And it's all made on-site in one of the largest and most sophisticated mobile plants in the country. The majority of the operation is computer controlled, and the man in front of the monitors is Selkirk native Don Bullen. Around the OE offices they would refer to Don as a Plant Operator, but in the concrete business, he's known as a Batch Man.

"I've been involved with production of concrete for over 20 years; since the late 80's," says Don, "Prior to my job here working for Lafarge, I worked for local 793 in Ontario at the De Beers Victor Diamond project as a working foreman in charge of the supply of concrete for that project. In 2008 I worked for an Alberta company making concrete for windmill foundations which was interesting but a smaller scale than what we are doing here. I got started in the business as a favor to a friend at Selkirk Redi Mix way back in the 80's."

Don's job is to ensure the smooth running of the concrete plant. He, along with co-workers Jamie Willet from Marathon, ON and Stephane St. Laurent from Quebec City, QC, do their best to supply in-spec material to keep the placing crews happy and productive. Don gives a lot of credit to the placing crews for dealing with all the concrete they produce. "When you're talking about pouring 1000 cubic meters of concrete, someone has to know what they're doing. That 'someone' is the placing crew," concedes Don.

This particular batch plant was put together by Lafarge Special Projects operations manager Bob Dymont using the largest Vince Hagen portable plant manufactured and incorporating twin BMH Rollmaster wet mix drums. The plant is raised up on beams to allow the concrete trucks to drive underneath where the finished product discharges into them. "We can make a lot of concrete in a short period of time" says Don.

"Ready Mix is the best building material in the world. Try building a dam out of pressure treated wood and see how long it lasts."

"One unique thing about this operation is that we've got an aggregate wash system involved." Don is referring to a series of spray nozzles and conveyor belts that clean the stone. "It washes the coarse aggregate immediately before being used in the batch adding a lot extra water to the equation, which can make it difficult to get the mix to the perfect consistency. "It was a point of contention because normally the aggregate is washed by the crushing crew. In washing it this way before combining it with the other ingredients, we end up with a lot of extra water in the mix. No other plants have a system like this. If it was pre-washed, it would be a piece of cake to batch. There is a point where too much water makes a bad batch. It makes the job challenging, and interesting"

Another thing that Don likes about this project is the size of it. "I like Ready Mix and I like big projects," says Don, as he tries to find a way of conveying the scale of this build. "There is 30 million dollars worth of concrete alone on this project, so this job qualifies on both counts." The scale is even more staggering when you consider that this is one of Manitoba Hydro's smaller projects. "By comparison,

this is a small dam. Keeyask is supposed to be four times this size. I'm looking forward to that one."

With regard to the concrete itself, Don admits to having a soft spot for the gooey grey material that dries rock-solid. "Ready Mix is the number one construction material in the world. Try building a dam out of pressure treated wood if you think it's so great, and see how long that lasts."

Building a dam of this size in the designated time frame means pounding out the concrete hard and fast. "In August we produced over 12,000 cubic meters of concrete, mixing and pouring 24 hours a day, 7 days a week." Moving all that concrete requires having a steady stream of mixer trucks at the ready, always waiting for the next load.

"The trucks come in and go out and it just goes on like that load after load. On Monday we did 700 meters, so we had 5 trucks going. That doesn't sound like a lot of trucks but when you consider it's only half-mile to the job site, and they're making up to 20 trips per shift, it makes for a lot of moving concrete." Transporting the Ready Mix from plant to pour site is just one of many challenges. With that much concrete to pour, having the plant break down can spell disaster.

"The plant has run extremely well, although we have had issues in the middle of some pours," says Don. "When that happens you've got to trouble shoot and get it going again fast! We're very fortunate to have a tremendous support team. A month ago we were 250 cubic meters into a 1000 meter pour, and the plant broke down in the middle of the night on the weekend. We had someone from Lafarge on the phone right away to help us troubleshoot the problem. We call them any time day or night and they're always ready to help."

Credit goes to Project Manager Mike Capizzo, and Bob Dymont, and the duo of John Tremblay, and Jeff Smith from the Special Projects group. Don claims "these guys are like the Detroit Red Wings of the concrete industry" in terms of being a first class operation.

When asked what he liked the least about the job, Don mentioned going hours without visiting the rest room, and the stress involved with trying to meet spec and keep everyone happy. "In this job there's times when you're stressed out and times when you have to multitask. Other times it's just goes good and everything runs



smooth. But when we're busy load after load you don't even get a chance to get out of the chair."

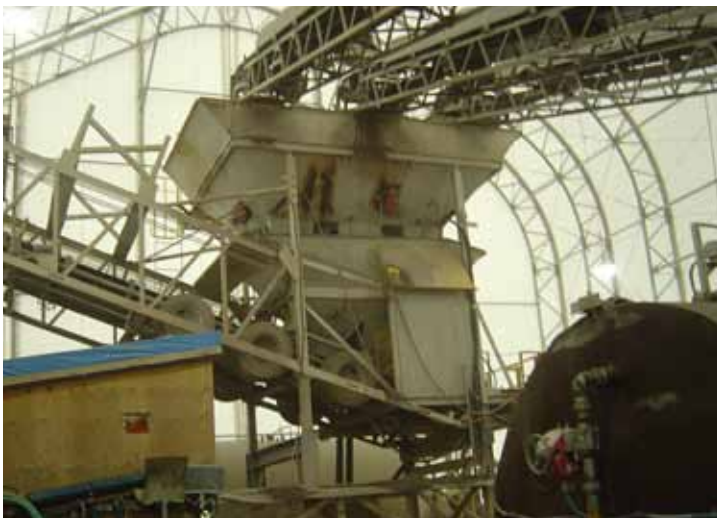
On the flip side, Don said he enjoys the sense of achievement, and the pride he feels knowing something he had a hand in building something that will be standing for decades and even centuries to come.

"The best part of the job is the accomplishment. When you go back and you look at the structure and you see all this concrete it's amazing. Last year they started with just a deep hole in the ground, and we filled the entire thing full of concrete. You look at it and it makes you think of the Hoover Dam holding back all that water. It's really something to think this dam will be doing its job for hopefully the next 750 to 1000 years."

Don says he'd like to thank OE987 Membership Services Representative Rob Middleton for his efforts in getting him onto the jobsite.

"Rob made this job happen for me. The reason I got in was through the Operating Engineers and Rob's persistence. Russ Shewchuk did a good job too. I thank them both for the support and faith in a union brother."

Don would like to add that he does not work alone. There are three 3-man OE crews working 4 weeks in and 2 out rotations. The guys are very good. When something needs doing, it gets done.





Wuswatim at a glance





photos courtesy of Damien Stanley



R.M. Of Gilbert Plains workers back on the job

By Audrey Kotak

Originally appeared in *The Exponent* Vol. 110, No. 37 on September 21, 2010

The unionized public works employees for the R.M. of Gilbert Plains went back to work Monday morning, September 13 following close to a month of strike action.

Union representative Janice Chase said that through discussions with the council's lawyer, they were able to reach a solution that the union was happy with. She said that while it seemed unnecessary to involve a lawyer to help negotiate with only five employees, the union is glad that the R.M. chose to bring one in. "... from the union perspective, I'm glad they hired a lawyer because...this council, I don't think they were moving forward collectively or in good faith..."

Chase said that the same lawyer has worked on other situations that she has been part of and, "he's an employers' lawyer...but he's fair and he understands the process, he understands legislation, he understands collective bargaining and I'm convinced without him coming to the table from the employer's perspective and getting them all on line and probably educating them, I think we still might have been out..."

Chase said there is always concern about hard feelings after a strike. "There's always hard feelings, that's the sad part. I think sometimes employers don't realize those hard feelings

- the strike will be settled, life will go on, but a lot of times the hard feelings go on forever, which is sad..." She was speaking in general as it was Wednesday morning, and she had not heard from any of the workers since their return to work.

The issue that brought them to a strike was performance evaluation. Chase explained that they were able to find wording that both sides could agree to. Progressing within a job classification will continue based on years of service, but promotion to a higher classification requiring a higher level of skill will be based on some form of performance review.

Reeve Larry Malowski didn't seem quite as enthused about the results, but agreed that an acceptable conclusion had been reached. "A compromise has been reached between the workers and the R.M. and...it's favorable to both parties."

He explained that they made some changes to their proposal, "Our labour lawyer...drew up a different format for what we wanted to incorporate into the contract. It was suitable to both parties so they agreed to come back to work."

Malowski said that the council will be continuing to look at ways to curb costs.



Left to Right: Darryl Medwid, Terry Hrychuk, Jim Musey, Dean Bates, and Shop Steward Lionel DeBaetes

They are considering the hiring of a non-union public works foreman. This person would be responsible for the other employees and would report back to the council. He sees the position as reducing the workload of the councillors.

As well the options and benefits of using private contractors for some work will be looked at. Private contractors were working throughout the strike period and he says they are continuing to work, "...they are blading right alongside the union guys."

Any changes in the contract with the union workers will be a part of the next round of negotiations. They are already nine months into the three year deal that was just settled, so Malowski expects negotiations to start again in about 12 months' time.

He noted that they will be working with the lawyer to be certain of what they can and can not do.

Additional Notes from Janice Chase, Business Representative, October 2010

"These guys should be congratulated for hanging tough on a non-monetary issue. The real issue was job security.

Unfortunately, the battle still continues with the employer refusing to sign the collective agreement and the union having had to file a grievance with respect to bargaining work."



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Member's Corner



Meeting Schedule

Winnipeg District Meeting: Thursday, December 2, 244 Cree Crescent, Murray Industrial Park, Winnipeg

Winnipeg Christmas Open House Meeting: Friday December 3, at 244 Crescent, Winnipeg from 5-8pm

Brandon District Meeting/Christmas Open House: Thursday, December 9 at Canadian Inn 150-5th Street, Brandon starting at 7pm

Reminder: out-of-work dues are **\$23.00 a month**
Please remember to phone us when you are laid off **Thank you**

Birth Announcement!

Local 987 Landfill Attendant Kelson Houle and his partner Candace have a new baby. Kelson Jr. was welcomed into the world September 1, 2010 weighing 7lbs, 12 oz.

Congratulations Candace and Kelson from all of us at Local 987!

OE Jacket Orders

If you would like a Local 987 jacket, please call (204) 786-8658 to place your order. (minimum order 12 jackets)

DID YOU REMEMBER / KNOW?

To inform us of your new address and phone number? It is important to keep us informed so that you can continue to receive the newsletters, meeting notices, tax receipts (if applicable), as well as to be reached for employment possibilities.

~The following is only applicable to members of Locals 987, 987 B, 987 C~

To do your monthly check-in? Check-ins can be done by phone, mail, in person, and also by email (local987@oe987.mb.ca). After 60 days your name is deleted from the out-of-work list(s). For the members that are collecting employment insurance, Human Resource Development has been checking on members to see if they have been calling in as per the Employment Insurance Registration guidelines.

To pay your out-of-work dues so that you do not become suspended or filed inactive? When you are suspended or filed inactive, your benefits with Coughlin & Associates are also suspended. In order for you to be eligible for benefits, you must be a member in good standing (paid for the current month or three months in advance)

Advise us that you have been recalled by your employer? There have been times that employers have missed your name from the monthly working dues remittance. If you have not advised your Union office that you have been recalled, we are not able to check with your employer for your dues.

Advise us, even if you have been name hired, that you are working out of province for another Operating Engineers Union? Penalties are as per the Dispatch Rules. If you are unclear about the Dispatch Rules or require a copy, please call the office at (204) 786-8658.

**You are not required to speak to your Business Representative
Daria, Cheryl, or Pat can help you with any of the above.**

Return Undeliverable Addresses To:

PM# 40042037

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WINNIPEG MB R3J 3W1