Dear members,

As leaves start to fall and the days grow shorter, we are reminded that change is an inevitable part of our existence. Just as seasons change, so does the staff of any workplace. This is my inaugural message as Business Manager, and I’d like to begin by saying I’m looking forward to serving you to the absolute best of my abilities. While I could spend an entire page talking about the changes here at Local 987, I’ve decided instead to focus on the changes that could happen in our local government.

The upcoming provincial election has the potential to affect our union membership. To help you decide who to vote for, we here at Local 987 prepared a policy questionnaire and sent it to the three major political parties. The questions, along with their answers can be found on the following six pages.

One party, the Manitoba Liberals, did not respond. The other two sent us some interesting answers that we’ve printed in their un-touched entirety. We have a diverse membership so we tried to choose a question for each section of our union demographic. Don’t be surprised if there’s one question that interests you more than the others. We tried to have something for everyone, but obviously we can’t cover every facet of the membership in only five questions.

Contrary to many other situations, in politics things don’t change unless we want them to. Even though we have the power to make change happen, sometimes it’s best to leave things as they are. That being said, overall I preferred the answers provided by the New Democrats.

It’s no secret that the NDP are traditionally more labour-friendly, and I felt their replies had more tangible outcomes. They made more of an effort to provide real facts and numbers and at the end of the day their platform will provide more stability for our organization. The PC responses were not as clearly defined and, at one point I asked myself “Was that an answer I just read, or an attack ad?” I could tell you more, but you’ll just have to read it for yourselves. You’ll be glad you did.

Our intention with this “Election Edition” of our newsletter is to present you with the best possible information to help you make an informed decision before the vote happens. Every union member should exercise their right to partake in democracy and vote for whoever they think best represents their interests, the interests of their union brothers and sisters, and the province as a whole.

In Solidarity,
Marc Lafond
1. **What will your party do to address the coming work shortage brought about by retiring baby boomers?**

   The NDP is committed to helping more Manitobans, regardless of where they live, receive the practical training they need to get to work in our growing economy. This means investing in college infrastructure, making it easier for businesses to take on apprentices and bringing training closer to home for rural families.

   Since 1999 we have significantly expanded the training sector across Manitoba. The number of active apprentices has more than doubled and we are on track to meet our 2007 commitment to create 4000 new apprenticeship seats. We created the University College of the North—opposed by the PCs—to meet the education and training needs of Aboriginal and northern students. And we have invested over $800 million in improvements to our colleges and universities, including $45M for the Len Evans Centre for Trades and Technology in Brandon and $12.6M to build the Heavy Equipment Transportation Centre at Red River College.

   During this campaign we have made a $60 million commitment towards the first phase of a new Skilled Trades and Technology Centre for Red River College, which will house many of the high demand construction trades programs including carpentry, electrical and plumbing. We will also help private sector employers take on more apprentices by increasing hiring incentives to a maximum of $3,000 for level 1 and 2 apprentices and to a maximum of $5,000 for level 3, 4, and 5 apprentices. And we have unveiled a Rural and Northern Apprentice Training strategy to invest $4 million per year in rural colleges, increase hiring incentives for rural employers and expand access to skilled training opportunities for rural Manitobans.

2. **Project Labour Agreements (PLAs) are pre-hire collective bargaining agreements with one or more labour organizations that establish the terms and conditions of employment for a specific construction project. Would your government continue to issue PLAs and do you feel they are being used effectively in our province?**

   Project Labour Agreements are common on many large-scale construction projects throughout Canada, and have been used successfully in Manitoba in the past. For example, Manitoba Hydro uses them for large-scale northern projects. An agreement was also critical in ensuring the Floodway Expansion project was completed on-time and on-budget. We support PLAs on a case-by-case basis, and as you may know, the existing PLA related to the Floodway project was
maintained and adapted for the East Side Road project when the Floodway assumed management of that project.

3. **Healthcare is always a major issue in any election. What major changes, cutbacks or improvements does your platform have in store for healthcare workers?**

Health care is a priority for the NDP because it’s a priority for Manitoba families. The NDP have unveiled a long-term vision to improve access to primary care and to ensure all Manitobans who want one will have access to a family doctor by 2015. As part of this plan we will introduce nurse-practitioner-led quick-care clinics and mobile clinics while expanding the successful Advanced Access care model.

When health care isn’t a priority, like in the 1990s, there are cuts, frontline health professionals are laid off, and wait times get worse. This is what happened in the 1990s, and this is what could happen again if Hugh McFadyen is able to follow through on his proposal to cut funding to important services like health care and education.

Health care has improved in many ways over the past decade. We’ve built or upgraded over 100 health facilities. We’ve added over 900 more personal care home and supportive housing spaces and expanded home care. We’ve cut down wait times. And we have added thousands of new health professionals, including nurses, doctors, nurse practitioners, technologists, paramedics, and health care aides among others, who all play a vital role within our health care system.

Health care will continue to be a top priority for the NDP. We have a plan to meet the health care staffing needs of the future by investing in training. Over the next four years we will hire a total of 2000 more nurses, to replace the 1000 nurses expected to retire over the next 4 years, and an additional 1000 nurses, including registered nurses, licenced practical nurses, registered psychiatric nurses and nurse practitioners. And we will train more nurses, by expanding nurse training by 100 seats at universities and colleges across the province and fully covering the cost of tuition and books for nurse practitioner students who agree to work in underserved rural communities once their training is complete.
4. Manitoba workplace safety standards have made leaps and bounds in recent years. What are your plans to maintain or improve this system and ensure this province’s workers come home safe?

It is a tragedy when a worker is hurt on the job or, worse yet, when a worker loses their life on a job site. The NDP has a strong record of ensuring that workers and their families are protected. Since taking office in 1999 we have more than doubled the number of officers enforcing health and safety laws in Manitoba workplaces, and we have expanded Workers Compensation coverage for injured workers to 37,000 new workers – the first expansion if WCB coverage in Manitoba since the 1960s. And in 2002 we undertook the first major overhaul of Manitoba’s workplace health and safety legislation in decades – the Conservatives voted against these rules and claimed they would “punish” businesses. And in 2010 when we increased fines for serious violations, Hugh McFadyen denounced these measures as being “red tape, regulation and bureaucracy”.

This summer we strengthened workplace safety and health rules to ensure that employers in areas like health care, security, pharmacies and crisis counseling have a violence prevention policy, and to require employers to report annually on violent incidents.

5. Now more than ever before Manitobans are trying to achieve the coveted work/life balance. How does your party plan to help them to do so?

We recognize that many Manitobans want more opportunity to balance their work hours with their home and family needs.

In 2003 we announced that students and teachers don’t have to go back to school until after the Labour Day weekend. This change provided more time for families to enjoy the summer together, as well as encouraging an increase in tourism and economic development.

As of 2008 Manitobans have enjoyed a long-awaited and well-deserved holiday between Christmas and Easter. Louis Riel Day not only addressed the growing need for better work/life balance but also helped make our province a more attractive place to live and work, while raising people’s quality of life.
Our view is that an expanded child care system significantly helps families balance the many demands and pressures on a modern family. We are committed to building a quality child care system in this province by recruiting and retaining child care workers and creating new spaces as part of our long-term child care plan, Family Choices. In year-three of our five year plan to add 6,500 child-care spaces and 1,000 enhanced nursery spaces by 2013 – we have already added 5,600 child care spaces and 829 enhanced nursery spaces. And we recently passed legislation to require early-learning or child-care facilities to be included in all new schools and major renovation projects.

During the last legislative session we also passed legislation to make it easier for employees and employers to work more flexible hours and to balance their work hours with their home and family needs.

In addition to these changes we have also been making investments into the recreational facilities Manitoban families enjoy. Since 2007 we have invested more than $119 million in recreation infrastructure, including community centres, gyms, splash pads, pools, skateboard parks, walking and bike paths, libraries and sports facilities. And as you may know, we have waived entry fees to provincial parks so that Manitobans can enjoy the great outdoors and experience the beauty of our provincial parks. While free entry has been in place we have also been investing in park improvements - since 2006 we have invested more than $40 million, which represents over six times what was invested in the equivalent period during the 1990s.
Thank you for the opportunity to answer the questions that you outlined in your survey. Our party’s responses to your questions are shown in italics.

1. What will your party do to address the coming work shortage brought about by retiring baby boomers?

*A McFadyen government would work to ensure that Manitoba has the skilled workers that it needs to grow our economy. As you know, a shortage of skilled labour is still one of the largest challenges facing businesses in Manitoba. A McFadyen government would look to find creative ways to address our shortage of skilled labour. New Manitobans and Aboriginal people have an important role to play. We need to attract skilled labour to our province and fully engage our Aboriginal workforce.*

- We will continue to support Manitoba’s Apprenticeship system, and look to increase the number of apprentices that are receiving training.
- We will encourage our post-secondary institutions to focus on market needs and practical training.
- We will provide a 10% training credit to be applied against an eligible company’s total payroll payable for each year.
- We will provide improved on-the-job training by altering the 1:1 journeyman to apprenticeship ratio to a 1:2 ratio.
- We will support the University College of the North to encourage additional training opportunities for northerners and Aboriginal students.

2. Project Labour Agreements (PLAs) are pre-hire collective bargaining agreements with one or more labour organizations that establish the terms and conditions of employment for a specific construction project. Would your government continue to issue PLAs and do you feel they are being used effectively in our province?

*Each infrastructure project in Manitoba is different. Depending on the type of project being developed, different forms of labour agreements will be appropriate. We will work with all stakeholders to develop labour agreements that reflect the most fitting way to proceed with individual projects.*
3. Healthcare is always a major issue in any election. What major changes, cutbacks, or improvements does your platform have in store for healthcare workers?

Healthcare is a top priority for Manitobans. We will refocus spending away from bureaucracy, administration, and feel-good advertising, and instead put that money into front line care and front line professionals. We’ll hire 1,700 more nurses, 250 more doctors, and more allied health care workers. We’ll put more ambulances on the street and work with paramedics to stem the backlog of ambulances waiting in ERs. We’ll also improve and increase access to care for seniors. We will increase transparency and efficiency, while improving the culture within our health care system by giving health care workers back their voices. We will improve the low morale in the health care system and improve the government’s relationship with health care providers. In the past 12 years more than 1,800 doctors have left Manitoba for greener pastures. Last year alone 128 doctors left Manitoba to practice elsewhere, including 56 who moved to Ontario. We’re hearing consistently from doctors that Manitoba’s top-down bureaucratic regional health authorities have bred low morale and created a physician retention problem for the province. We will establish opportunities for meaningful engagement, open communication, and direct input into decisions that affect the front lines of care. We’ll also improve and increase access to care for seniors. We will increase transparency and efficiency, while improving the culture within our health care system by giving health care workers back their voices. We will improve the low morale in the health care system and improve the government’s relationship with health care providers. We will improve the low morale in the health care system and improve the government’s relationship with health care providers.

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5. Now more than ever before Manitobans are trying to achieve the coveted work/life balance. How does your party plan to help them do so?

In order to help Manitobans achieve the coveted work/life balance we will reduce red tape in our province by 20% over four years. We will focus on maintaining regulations that protect the safety and welfare of Manitobans, but eliminate regulations that don’t serve a useful purpose. It is estimated that red tape costs Manitobans $945 million each year. We will reduce redundant regulations so that Manitobans can spend more time with their friends and family instead of spending their time navigating red tape.

Thank you for your input, and for giving the Progressive Conservative Party an opportunity to respond to your questions.

Sincerely,

Mavis Taillieu
PC Critic for Advanced Education and Training
Meeting Schedule

Winnipeg District Meeting: Thursday, Dec. 1, 2011 at 244 Cree Crescent, Murray Industrial Park, Winnipeg at 7pm

Christmas Open House - Brandon: Thursday, Dec. 8th, 2011 Location to be determined, Brandon MB starting at 7pm

Please be advised
The Keeyask Hydro Dam Project is now accepting Pre-Registration at www.gov.mb.ca/jrs

Birth Announcements

Union Member Chris Kellner from the RM of Springfield and his wife Jamie are proud to announce the birth of their daughter Mercedes born September 19, 2011

As well, Terry and Shirlee Matvieshen are excited to announce the birth of their daughter Rikki Lane born September 9, 2011

Congratulations from all of us at Local 987!