

**REPORT OF THE 2011 UNION OF ENVIRONMENT WORKERS CONVENTION**  
By Dave Roy, observer

The 2011 Union of Environment Workers (UEW) Convention was held in Victoria from August 16 to 18. It, like the P.S.A.C. Convention, is held every three years. This one was interesting, as always. The Convention deals with resolutions sent in by Locals or the National Executive. The purpose of the resolutions is to change/improve the Component. I have listed some of the highlights below.

The meal rates for Component business were increased to breakfast-\$18, lunch-\$27, dinner-\$44, and incidentals-\$22.

The UEW budget for the next three years was approved.

A resolution to enable the Alternate Regional Vice Presidents (RVPs) to perform the duties of the RVP, if the RVP was unable, was not carried. I was very disappointed, as we have been trying for this change for ages and there was no dues increase involved. A similar resolution enabling Alternate Equal Opportunity (EO) reps was carried.

A resolution making the Local president the 1<sup>st</sup> delegate from a Local to the Component Convention was carried.

A resolution was passed so that the National EO rep can not also hold a Local office position.

Resolutions instructing the Component office to post National Executive minutes on the web, and updating their website were passed. They are also to send electronic links rather than paper copies, except where requested.

A resolution increasing the pension for the UEW president was not passed, but a resolution was passed that, if such a resolution is passed at the P.S.A.C. Convention, that P.S.A.C. hold a membership vote and, if it comes into place, it is effective at the time it passes. Another passed that UEW not support this change in any way. This, to me, was the most important part of the Convention. If this change had passed, it would have meant huge dues increase for members.

A resolution was forwarded to the P.S.A.C. Convention to increase the weekend training allowance to \$75.00.

A resolution passed that gave the National Executive delegate status at Local President's conferences.

A resolution went through that instructed that the monthly membership list be sent to Locals electronically.

UEW have to prepare an information package to be distributed to new employees.

I was very happy to see that a resolution passed eliminating the registration fees to Locals for future UEW Conventions. A similar resolution was passed and forwarded to P.S.A.C. regarding their Convention.

UEW now has to provide each delegate to P.S.A.C. Regional Conventions \$500.

The RVP dinner allowance now includes all Local Executive members (it previously only covered 4).

A resolution carried and was forwarded to P.S.A.C. to delete Section 25 (regarding fines during strikes) as they have no power to enforce this. Another one to rescind existing suspensions of suspended members during the last strike did not pass. I was disappointed because they shouldn't be suspended for more than 5 years (according to P.S.A.C. Constitution) and they have been.

Another one was forwarded to P.S.A.C. that, if passed at the P.S.A.C. Convention, would leave the strike route either arbitration or conciliation until a vote is held (they recently changed it so it automatically goes back to conciliation with every new round of bargaining).

P.S.A.C. will set up automated votes if a resolution passes at their Convention.

We had Jayne Powers from NCR run for the position of Vice President from the 'floor'. It was a close vote. In the end, Mark Power from the Newfoundland Region won.

It was a relatively uneventful Convention (compared to many previous ones that I have attended). Also, the UEW President, Bill Pynn did not run again (he had been President for 15 years) and so we have a new President, Todd Panas. I am excited, as he seems quite capable, and we were long overdue for a change.

**Stephen Vanneste**  
**Observer Report – UEW Triennial Convention**  
**Victoria, B.C.**

This was the first event of this nature I have attended and it was a very rewarding and interesting experience. The opportunity to see how the UEW conducts its business and operates at this level was certainly eye-opening, even entertaining.

The process involved in presenting and voting on the various resolutions was often perplexing. At times the resolutions were dispensed with so rapidly, you could hardly locate the pages in the binder and the vote had been taken and they were on to the next one. I found it quite confusing that many of the resolutions appeared to me to be virtually identical, so I wondered at the prudence of wasting so much time on essentially the same thing. It would be possible to streamline this process and even manage to get more resolutions to the discussion/debate stage. This would really serve a double purpose. In addition to an increased number of resolutions (the main purpose of which is to help develop a better functioning union), by eliminating the necessity to “prioritize” the long list of resolutions, this could reduce the tangential effect this affords the various factions to work their various agendas. After all, the only agenda anybody there should have is to the members they represent and what is best for them, given the circumstances at play at that time. One final observation on the topic of resolutions, given we cannot influence or dictate anything to the PSAC, delegate time would be better spent if they did not spend so much time discussing “recommendations” to be forwarded to the PSAC for their consideration. Have any of these recommendations ever been adopted?

On the whole the convention was well run and the host committee did a great job. And the location was simply spectacular. Although, I thought their playing loose with the schedule for registration that Monday evening was a little unfortunate. Plus, the absence of signage made it a little difficult to find the room. But these are just small things.

All things considered, attending the convention was an excellent experience. Apparently, this convention was a little more subdued than previous ones, largely the result of the imminent changing of the National Leadership. This was certainly necessary and only time will tell if it was a good thing. I hope to have the opportunity to attend the next convention and see if the change really was for the better or if our union has slipped back into its old ways. I sincerely hope we have moved on from those days of personal agendas and the cult of personality. I guess we’ll see in three years.



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**REPORT OF THE 2011 UNION OF ENVIRONMENT WORKERS CONVENTION**  
**by Monique Duchesneau, observer**

This UEW convention was very special to me since it is the last one that I will attend as I will be retiring in a few years and in addition to that I am one of the members that was affected by the cuts. Over the years I attended a few conventions, some as delegate and some as observer.

I am not going to go into details about all the resolutions because the Local observers already gave a good summary of what happened, but I would like to make a few comments on what I felt or thought of what happened at that convention.

One of the main things that happened was the election. There has been a lot of changes at the national level like a new president, vice-president and several new RVPs. In my opinion, some of these changes were long overdue. It will be nice and refreshing to have some new people with new perspectives and new ideas.

A few of the resolutions stood out for me.

I was very surprised and disappointed that the resolution about the alternate RVP replacing the RVP when he would not be able to perform his/her duties. It should have passed because it just makes sense that this should happen when needed. That was another thing that was long overdue and it didn't happen...hopefully at a next convention, who knows?

On the other hand, there were several resolutions that passed and that will make a positive change and save money to the locals and the component like sending electronic documents instead of printing them, not charging registration fees to the locals for conventions, sending an information package to all new members, etc.

The main resolution that I was very happy didn't pass was the one about increasing the pension of the UEW president. That would have meant a major increase in the membership dues.

In conclusion, I would say that it was an interesting convention. Everything went pretty smoothly. There were no long discussions for most of the resolutions, although the process always seems long. It is good to be part of the convention and see how things really work and happen.