

# YOUR

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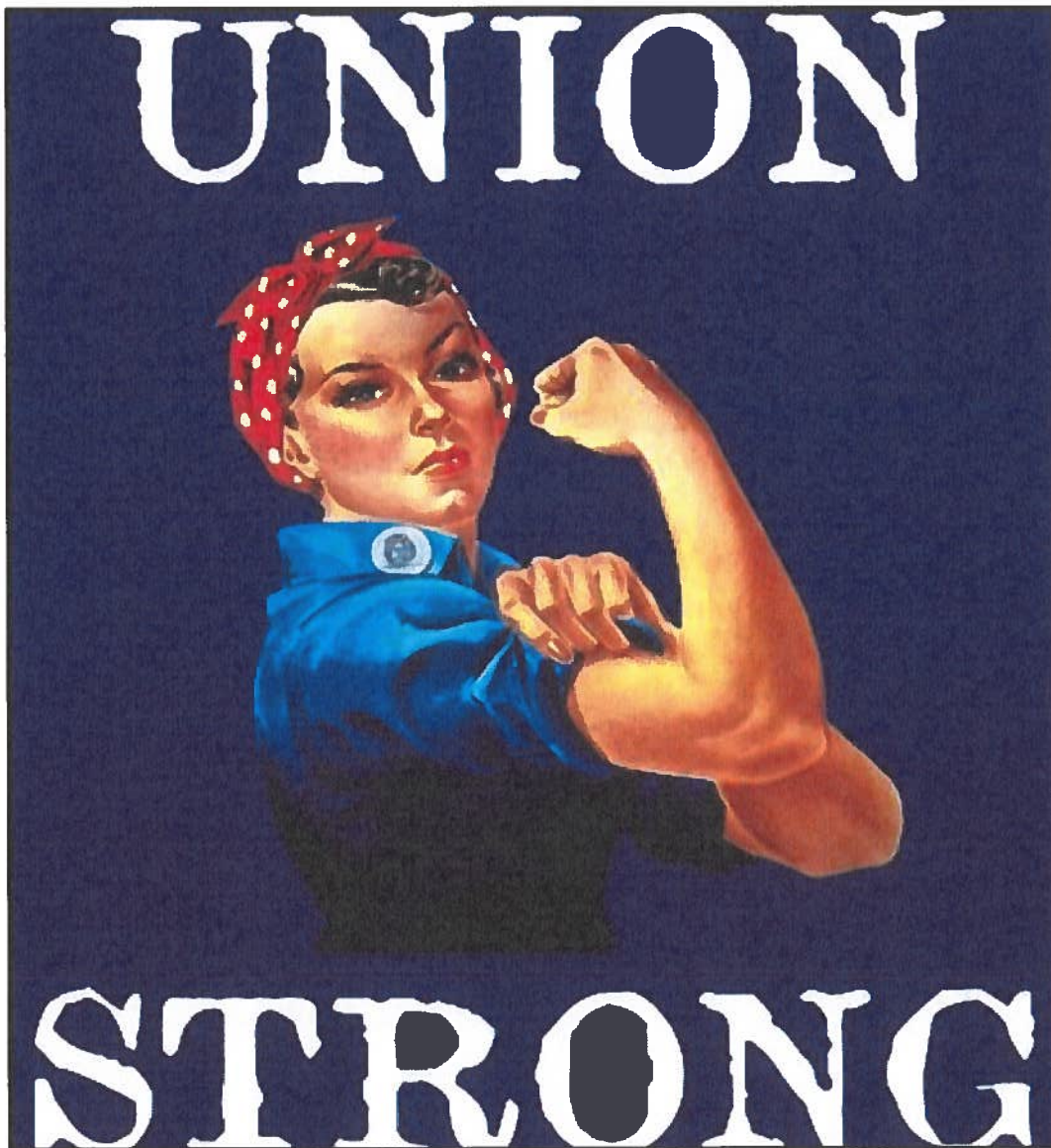
**Local 480**



**Trail, B. C.**

June 2025

VOL.53 No.3



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# We are Online and Live!



[www.facebook.com/usw480](http://www.facebook.com/usw480)

You can also find us at: [www.uswlocal480.com](http://www.uswlocal480.com)

## YOUR UNION

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"Your Union" is a member of the United Steelworkers Press Association and abides by the constitution of the organization

Come check out our Local 480 merchandise!  
Items may be purchased at the hall.



### LOCAL 480 MEMBERSHIP MEETING June 19, 2025 3:45 PM 480 STEELWORKER HALL

- Pensioners Picnic
- Summer Membership Meetings

# President's Report

Chris Walker, President

## MENTAL HEALTH

Hello everyone,

Mental health is just as important as physical health, and it's something that affects all of us—Over the past few years, I've spoken about mental health in several of my articles, and for good reason—it's an issue that affects every one of us, whether it's directly or indirectly. Lately, it's become increasingly apparent that we should start having these conversations more openly again.

Life doesn't stop moving, and neither do the stresses that come with it on and off the job. It's easy to push through and pretend everything is fine, especially in work environments where toughness is often valued; however, the truth is, checking in on each other and creating space for open, honest conversations can make all the difference. In busy, high-pressure environments, it's easy to overlook the early signs of someone who may be struggling. That's why it's important we look out for one another and create a culture where it's okay to speak up and ask for help.

### Common Signs and Symptoms to Watch For:

- **Changes in mood** – sadness, irritability, or extreme mood swings
- **Withdrawal** – avoiding social interactions, becoming unusually quiet or isolated
- **Fatigue or low energy** – seeming constantly tired or drained
- **Lack of concentration** – difficulty focusing, making decisions, or staying on task
- **Changes in performance** – noticeable drop in work quality or motivation
- **Appetite or sleep changes** – eating much more or less, or experiencing insomnia or oversleeping
- **Increased use of substances** – alcohol, drugs, or other coping mechanisms
- **Expressions of hopelessness or feeling overwhelmed** – verbal or written

### How You Can Help:

- **Check in** – A simple “How are you doing?” can open the door for someone to talk.
- **Listen without judgment** – Sometimes just being heard makes a huge difference.
- **Encourage support** – Suggest speaking to a co-worker, Union Rep., or accessing mental health resources.
- **Lead by example** – Normalize taking care of your own mental health and asking for support.

You don't have to have all the answers to make a difference—you just need to show that you care. Creating a safe, respectful, and supportive workplace helps everyone thrive.

I wanted to take a moment to talk about our summer students. This year, we currently have 32 students on site, and by now, most of them have been with us for nearly a month. It's important that we all take the time to ensure they not only feel welcome, but that we also go the

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extra mile when it comes to their safety. These students are new to the site, and many are new to the workforce altogether, so they'll be looking to us for guidance. Let's lead by example—whether that means offering help, reinforcing safe work practices, or simply checking in to see how they're doing. A small effort on our part can make a big difference in their experience and well-being.

I want to take a moment to address something that came up quite a bit during the last federal election. I received a number of suggestions—and some demands—regarding what our union should be doing politically and which parties we should be supporting. I appreciate that

many of you are passionate about these issues, and I respect that. Politics can be deeply personal, and that's exactly why I'm going to say this—hopefully for the last time. As long as I'm in this position, our union will not endorse any political party.

What we *will* do is support every one of our members and their right to vote however they choose. Our role is to protect and advocate for your rights in the workplace—not to tell you what box to check on a ballot. We represent over 1,200 members from a wide range of backgrounds, beliefs, and political views. We can't do that effectively if we start picking sides. Our strength lies in our unity, not in political division. Let's continue focusing on

the issues that impact our work, our safety, and our families—together.

As we head into the warmer months, I just want to wish you all a fun, safe, and eventful summer. I hope you're able to take some well-deserved time for rest and relaxation—whatever that looks like for you.

Thanks again for all the work you do and for continuing to support each other and our union.

**Our next meeting will be held on June 19th at 3:45 PM.**  
Hope to see you there.

In solidarity,  
Chris Walker

## Important Contact information for Reporting!

Doing what's right line # 1-888-494-0274



WCB Reporting line 1-888-621-7233 or report online at:  
<https://prevruw.online.worksafebc.com/>



# Grievance Committee Report

Jesse Nicoll, Grievance Chair

## Active Grievance Update



Hello Brothers, Sisters and fellow Steelworkers,

First off, I want to give a quick synopsis of where we are at with grievances. We currently have a Grievance at Stage 2 for a operator who was suspended.

There are a few grievances at stage 3. One is for a denial of Long-Term Disability pay for one of our members. We had filed a grievance for a violation of privacy when the company sent Safety Net to spy on one of our members. We are working towards getting a resolution to this grievance.

There was another grievance filed recently on behalf of all the membership that park their vehicles on-site. Safety Net has been looking in your vehicle windows and reporting what they find to management. Please

keep an eye out on this and report it to me at the Union Hall if you witness this happening.

Four of our trades workers were stepped in relation to an alleged lock-out violation a few months ago. We are waiting to hear back from the Company on those grievances, and we'll most likely move them to arbitration if the company denies those grievances.

We also filed a grievance involving a pay issue that came out of some proposed automation in the Oxide plant. I recently had a good meeting with area management and the HR department. Hopefully that issue will be resolved in the next few weeks.

We have a few grievances waiting for arbitration. Three grievances are involving a termination of employment. We have

had a one day hearing already and sought an adjournment to get further medical evidence. The next hearing date is in September with Arbitrator Cathy Knapp.

We have another arbitration booked for November with Arbitrator Ken Thornicroft. I will update you all on what grievance we will be arbitrating on that date after the grievance committee meets next.

We are currently in the June transfer window. Please reach out to me if you have any questions regarding your transfer request.

Have a great summer!

In Solidarity,  
Jesse





# Benefits Co-ordinator Report

Leigh Creegan, Benefits Co-ordinator

## Positive Wins For the Membership

To the members of Local 480,

The hot weather is here. Be sure to take the necessary breaks to keep yourself cool and safe during these months. Now that summer is here, we have a lot of summer students on the property. Be sure to look out for them, as for many this is the first time they have worked in an environment like ours. We are well versed on the risks of the job, take the time to work with the summer students on your crew to ensure they stay safe to return back to school.

Our Healthy Lifestyle Account is now in a new benefit year. If you have any receipts to claim prior to June 1, 2025, you have 90 days to get those into Sun Life to get your reimbursement.

In my last article I mentioned we were working on and waiting for multiple decisions from the Review Board. We are

now waiting for a decision on four appeals, and I am happy to report as of the other day we received a new decision in favour of our member. This is a big win for our Union. The other four decisions should be back by September, and I can update the membership then.

Previously, I talked about accommodations and how the process works. Since then, your Union has made some big gains with accommodations while also cutting down on contracting out. With the help of Nylan LaFreniere our Contracting Out Chair, he has brought to my attention jobs being contracted out that could easily be done by one of our workers needing an accommodated position. The Company has been very receptive to this and have been proactive at looking to get workers accommodated into those roles before looking at contracting out. Good work to all parties involved and I'm looking forward to what op-

portunities this can bring to our members going forward.

The Union will meet with the Company along with members of Corporate and Canada Life on July 15 to review our pension plan and group RRSP. We will provide updates on those in our next edition of, "Your Union." Be sure to keep your beneficiary information up to date and if you change your address call down to the hall, 250-368-9131 and let Jo-Lynne know.

One last thing, be sure to report all injuries not only is it your duty to do so, but a little injury can turn into a bigger injury and it's best to have it documented at the time. This will only help you with any claims that may need to be made about the injury.

In Solidarity,  
Leigh



**Sign-up For Text Alerts by Texting 480 to 32323**

# Health & Safety Committee

Kyle Jorgensen, Safety Chair

## Summertime Safety



The heat is here and so is summer. As Dean mentions in his article, with high temperatures it is important to watch out for the signs of heat stress and stay well hydrated. Also, if you are experiencing symptoms make sure to report to first aid to get the proper treatment before it turns into something worse.

Also, with summer comes summer students. As always, please keep a watchful eye out for students. Some students may have industrial experience, and some may have no industrial experience at all. Students may also be hesitant to speak up or to ask for help, so please if you see something lend a hand or give us a call at 368-9131. This is also a good time to remind everyone that students

will not be participating in lockouts other than to apply their own personal locks. There is some much going on that it is important that we help students focus on their main goals of helping out for summer vacation relief and making money to go back to school.

This brings us to the topic of training. Recently, there has been a focus group formed looking at some of the aspects of training. Dean is our rep that sits in on this group. As training is such a huge topic the group is working on narrowing the focus to start making improvements in some areas. One thing that needs to be stressed, however, is that we are not rushing training or skipping aspects of training due

to being short of people in the plants. We need to make sure that proper training is delivered so that we do not miss any hazards. There are so many hazards in the plants that we must ensure that we are not rushing through training. Proper training on the front end will save lots of time on the back end and prevent all kinds of issues.

Finally, as the vacation season is approaching I hope everyone is able to take some time away and enjoy themselves. With so much going on day to day it is important to take some time away and de-stress from the day to day.

In Solidarity,  
Kyle





## Safety Co-ordinators

Dean Johnson & Jay Walters

### Challenge the Status Quo



In the type of environment we work in, it can be easy to get used to less than ideal conditions and just accept them as part of the job. Since writing my last article, I've seen a lot of different workers from various parts of the Hill come forward to question the current state of their work environment. This is a really good trend to see, as it demonstrates that people are thinking outside the box and trying to create a better and safer workplace. Members from many different areas have shown a willingness to ask questions about things they see in the field every day, and procedures or, "standard practices," that have been happening for a long time.

It takes courage to come forward and challenge the status quo, especially when others seem mostly OK with it. Odds are, if you look at any job, you can find a way to make it safer and/or more efficient. Is that ventilation fan down half the time? Is this really the best way to achieve zero energy for maintenance work? Are those lifting lugs in good condition? Are we managing heat stress adequately? If my crew is short-handed every day, are we still working safely and not running around potentially missing hazards? Can we eliminate these, "minor," process upsets that happen regularly? Are we allotting enough time for adequate

cleaning of both work and rest areas? Is this job truly safe to proceed with?

I encourage all of you to continue to bring these things forward and discuss with your coworkers and supervisors; especially any shortcomings that have been accepted as, "normal." We cannot accept any deficiency as, "normal." There may be hazards we can't eliminate, but we can control them. As always, we are available to help assess the situation.

In Solidarity,  
Jay Walters

## Summer Students

Local 480 Members...

As we can all see, we are quickly rolling into summer, and it is heating up out there. Keeping your body hydrated is a super important key to help avoid heat stress and exhaustion. Sweating is your body's way of cooling you down so remember to drink water throughout your shift and during breaks.

On another note, June is the month when pretty much all our summer students have arrived, are learning their roles, are being trained and are getting settled into their positions. Remember to lend them a hand if they need it and as always keep supporting each other. Summer vacations can often leave us with minimal crews so remember, if you are not properly trained or unsure of a task, stop and get the

help you need. When you need assistance, Operator Instructors are a knowledgeable resource as well as any qualified Peer Trainers. Ask for help and if there is an unsafe condition, stop and re-evaluate. We will always be available to help assess a situation if need be. Call the Hall if you need us (250) 368-9131.

Take care out there,  
Dean



## Office and Technical Chair, Report

Ron McKenzie, Unit Chair

### Sun Life: Lifetime Maximum

Hi Everyone,

In this article I want talk about 2 recent issues we have been dealing with. Sun Life \$100,000 Lifetime Max:

After it was brought up by Matt Parilla in his last town-hall, I received many calls from people concerned about the \$100,000 lifetime maximum on our Sunlife benefits, which I have been addressing as they come in.

This cap is long overdue for an increase due to rising medical costs, particularly for medications and the Union has made proposals to increase the max in every bargaining session I have been a part of and I'm sure many more before that. However, the Company has refused and instead have only agreed to deal with instances of people reaching the cap, case by case.

Until we are able to fix this in bargaining, you should be aware of your own usage and



how close you are to the maximum. You can check this by logging into your Sun life account online through, "My Sun Life", then going to the, "Benefits centre" subpage, then the, "FAQ's - General FAQ's tab" and scrolling down to "what is my maximum".

Please contact the union hall if you are concerned that you are going through it too quickly and we can suggest ways to help reduce your costs.

### TST Crew Reduction

More recently we have been dealing with a restructuring and crew reduction from head office in Vancouver, that affected unionized technicians at Technical Services Trail (TST).

Through discussions with the management team and the support of local HR at TST, we were able to highlight potential future work and convinced them to reduce the total number of positions cut. In addition to this we were able to work with the

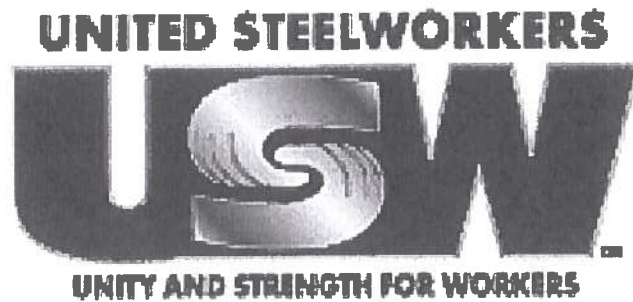
Trail operations HR and Technical groups to find jobs for all the unionized employees that were crew reduced out of TST without it triggering any bumping outside of TST. Most importantly, no unionized employees were laid off.

While it is a shame that corporate has chosen to cut this valuable work, the fact that we were able to protect our union members as much as possible, shows the benefit of being a part

of the union and the value of respectful working relationship we have built with the Trail operations and TST management teams.

I hope you all enjoy the summer months ahead, as always contact your shop stewards or the Union hall if you have any questions or concerns.

In Solidarity,  
Ron McKenzie



**United Steelworkers  
Local 480**

# **43<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL PENSIONER'S PICNIC**

**All Area Retirees & Seniors Welcome**

**Thursday, June 26th**

**Dinner @ 5:00pm**

**Birchbank Picnic Grounds**

**Please bring your own plate/utensils  
Tickets are \$10.00 each and need to be purchased  
at the Local 480 hall prior to the picnic.**