

B.C. forestry firms reach labour deal

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A tentative labour agreement has been reached between forestry companies and about 2,000 workers in northern British Columbia who have been without a contract for more than a year, the union said on Tuesday. Details of the four-year deal were not released, but it includes wage increases in the last two years, job security measures and the possibility of profit-sharing if lumber markets improve, the United Steelworkers said.

The union reached the agreement with Conifer, which is the bargaining agent for several forestry companies with mills in northern British Columbia, including Tolko Industries, AbitibiBowater Inc, Conifex Timber Inc. and West Fraser Timber Co.

The industry's previous contract expired at the end of June 2009, but workers remained on the job. The new agreement appears similar to a deal the union reached in February with Canfor. Talks continue between the union and employers in central and southern British Columbia, as well as those in the coastal region.

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