

## *Steelworkers Respond to Interior Forest Labour*

Talks broke down Wednesday afternoon between the Interior Forest Labour Relations Association, representative for most of British Columbia's southern interior lumber producers, and the United Steelworkers Union.

"After inviting the Union to resume bargaining in late October, the southern interior company association has now—after only a few days of meaningful bargaining—turned their backs on the Union's attempt to meet and maintain the northern interior pattern agreement," according to a USW bulletin obtained by *Madison's*.

### **Labour Trouble**

"Surprisingly, this third-rate employer position is endorsed by the same IFLRA members Tolko Industries and West Fraser Mills who consider the pattern fair for their northern interior employees but sadly, too good for their southern interior counterparts," continues the USW bulletin.

"The USW across the province of BC has tried hard to enter a new and better labour relationship model, and I hope that applies here as well," said Pat Bell, BC's Minister of Forests, Mines, and Lands to *Madison's* in a phone interview.

"It is in the best interests of everyone to have labour stability," continued Bell. "This may be a flurry of rhetoric for now, I hope calmer heads will prevail in the future."

The USW bulletin concludes with the statement, "Local Unions in the southern interior will be seeking a mandate from their members."

"The employer's group took a turn for the worse Wednesday," explained Bob Matters, Chair of the Steelworkers Wood Council, to *Madison's* in an phone interview. "It was a regressive proposal."

"We are going to take time to communicate with union members to make sure they have all the information, no matter how long that takes."

"We can't ensure production and delivery will continue uninterrupted before a collective agreement is signed," concluded Matters.

Due to schedule constraints, *Madison's* was unfortunately unable to reach an IFLRA spokesperson by press time Friday.

## *AFPA 3rd Quarter*

Total shipments of lumber, panelboard, pulp and paper manufactured by Alberta Forest Products Association-member companies in 3Q 2010 rose modestly over 2Q and increased