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West Fraser ratifies contract

By [Carole Rooney - 100 Mile House Free Press](#)

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After more than 18 months without a contract, West Fraser's 100 Mile Lumber and Williams Lake Plyw division employees voted yesterday in favour of the ratification of a collective agreement.

Combined with the results from other United Steelworkers (USW) Local 1-425 members in Quesnel, wh favour of the agreement last week, slightly more than 60 per cent of members at the three divisions com voted to accept the four-year agreement.

USW 1-425 president Bill Derbyshire says union members had been without a contract since the previou agreement expired in July 2009.

"For 100 Mile House, it was 73.8 per cent acceptance, so they're fairly happy.

"The planer [staff] is the most disgruntled ... because we did some changes to the hours of work, but we letter of understanding to address that and it passed."

Overall, some significant gains were made to the language, including severance pay for permanent parti closures and the right to refuse unsafe work, he says, adding they were all key issues.

"It was a long time coming and we appreciate the membership hanging in there.

"We eventually did get the agreement done, and the big issue again was all earned vacations out of the p plant, along with a [few] smaller issues like hours of work and apprenticeship."

USW Wood Council chair Bob Matters says he has also received positive comments on the contract from 100 Mile Lumber employees.

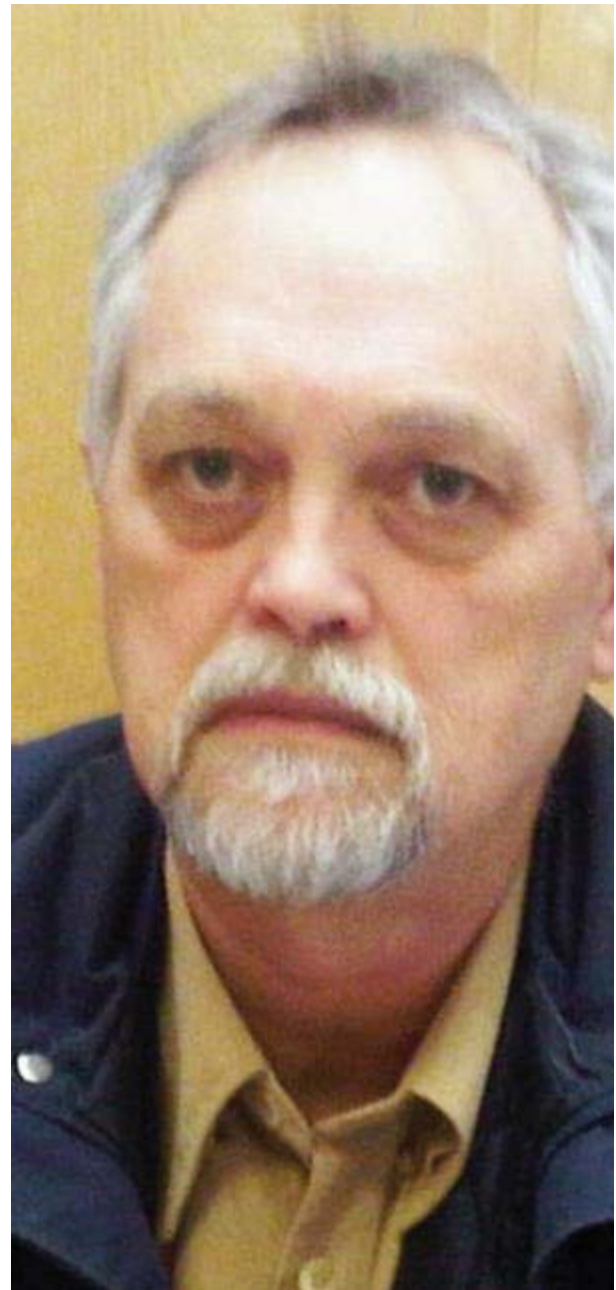
"I have heard from some members in 100 Mile who expressed their appreciation for the negotiating committee and for [Derbyshire's] efforts."

He explains the difference between this contract and the last version, which failed to get ratified after it was voted down at William Lake Plywood, was primarily clarifications.

"There were some changes to the language to try to give clarity and comfort around the most contentious issue, which was the earned vacation entitlements."

While they are happy to get agreements at these operations, Matters says the union is "still very frustrated" that West Fraser will not come to agreement with them for the Southern Interior, which includes its Chasm operations.

100 Mile Lumber manager Rick Johnsen was unavailable for comment.



Bill Derbyshire

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