



## UNITED STEELWORKERS (USW)

### Steelworkers Ratify Four-Year Agreement with IFLRA in Southern Interior

BURNABY, BC, May 19 /CNW/ - United Steelworkers (USW) members employed by Interior Forest Labour Relations Association (IFLRA) member companies in the BC southern interior have ratified a four-year collective agreement, retroactive to July 1, 2009.

Members in USW Local 1-405 Cranbrook, Local 1-417 Kamloops and Local 1-423 Kelowna voted in majority in favour of the agreement that was reached on April 21, 2011.

The agreement provides union members with enhanced job security language that finally addresses the exclusion of working foreman from bargaining unit work, improved contract language surrounding permanent and/or partial closure of manufacturing operations, and a long-overdue trades rate adjustment for Tradesmen and Power Engineers.

The IFLRA-USW agreement builds on the pattern items that were negotiated in earlier rounds of bargaining when the union concluded deals with Canadian Forest Products, West Fraser and Council on Northern Interior Forest Employment Relations.

The IFLRA pattern agreement - like other deals in the Interior - provide USW members with wage increases of 2 percent in years 3 and 4, protects the members' Long Term Disability Plan and includes strong health and safety language. Improved life insurance and medical travel coverage are also part of the settlement as well as assistance for apprentices.



USW Wood Council Chair Bob Matters acknowledges that talks took place at a time when the forest industry was experiencing significant market difficulties and suggests these tough times caused negotiations to be stretched out for almost 22 months. Ratification of the IFLRA southern interior agreement brings to a close all major forest industry bargaining in the BC Interior, Matters says.

The USW, Canada's largest industrial union, represents about 11,000 forest workers in the BC Interior.

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