

BC INTERIOR

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STEELWORKERS OFFER PATTERN DEALS IN BC INTERIOR

Negotiations in the southern interior forest industry continue as USW Local Unions in Cranbrook, Kelowna, and Kamloops talk up the southern interior pattern with large industry players International Forest Products, Federated Cooperatives, and Louisiana Pacific.

Just last May, the BC Bargaining Committee concluded a deal with the IFLRA that 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 deal also provided wage increases of 2 percent in years 3 and 4, protected the members' Long Term Disability Plan, strengthened our health and safety language, and made improvements to life insurance and medical travel coverage. This deal became the southern interior pattern.

Working from the sensible and affordable solutions found in the southern interior pattern, these progressive nuts and bolts will provide the basis for the remaining deals with large industry players—companies that remain outside of the IFLRA bargaining agency but compete on the same playing field. These companies—Federated Cooperatives Canoe Plywood and Sawmill operation in the Local 1-417 Kamloops, International Forest Products Grand Forks Sawmill operation in Local 1-423 Kelowna, and International Forest Products Castlegar Sawmill operation in Local 1-405 Cranbrook—are all either preparing to sit down with Local Union bargaining teams or have already traded documents in preliminary talks.

One Columbia Valley forest company—Louisiana Pacific Golden Engineered Wood Products—has already concluded a deal with Local 1-405 based on the southern interior pattern. With the deal now ratified by the crew, Louisiana Pacific is well on it's way to extending their market share at the expense of those other companies who seem to be waiting until the last minute.

Talks between Kamloops Local 1-417 and Federated Cooperatives in Canoe are in their early stages while bargaining continues in the latter stages with International Forest Products in Castlegar with Cranbrook Local 1-405 and in Grand Forks with Kelowna Local 1-423.

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