



# GSU News

only YOU can make GSU your union

Issue 1 - 2012

## Viterra takeover

# Q&A

**Q. In Glencore's takeover of Viterra, what happens to our accumulated sick time and vacation time?**

**A.** Employees' collective agreement rights transfer to the new employer.

GSU answers your takeover questions on our web page - [www.gsu.ca](http://www.gsu.ca). Send us your questions. We won't share your identity, but we will share the answer to your question under the **Viterra Takeover/member questions** section of our web page.

### Inside

In the community: Sub-Local 1.14 and SARBI .....	3
Dust in the workplace - how much is too much? .....	4
GSU scholarship program .....	6

## Facts to date: Glencore takeover of Viterra

Since the March 20, 2012, announcement that Viterra's board of directors has agreed to a friendly takeover by Glencore PLC, GSU has received a large volume of questions from employees represented by the union, and from pensioners and former employees entitled to a pension under the Viterra Pension Plan for GSU members. We are working hard to respond to questions and to provide current information to members by email and on GSU's web site at [www.gsu.ca](http://www.gsu.ca).

These are a few of the most important details to date.

- The Canada Labour Code ensures the collective agreements between GSU and Viterra will be binding on Glencore.
- Glencore can't vote to decertify the union, but an employee(s) claiming to represent a majority in a bargaining unit could conceivably make an application to decertify GSU. Such a move would put unionized employees' contractual rights at risk - including Article 24 (Worker Adjustment Process).
- Employees' severance rights, pension rights and other employment rights provided by GSU's collective agreements and

other agreements with the current and future employers continue as long as there are collective agreements and representation by GSU.

- Glencore has said they intend to honour GSU's collective agreements with Viterra. Indeed they are required to do so by law.

GSU general secretary Hugh Wagner has communicated with Glencore's executive in charge of Canadian operations about the details of the effects of a takeover. Glencore has given assurances they will enter into a dialogue with GSU regarding the details of the proposed takeover and the impact on employees represented by GSU when they are able to do so.

"Understandably there is a lot of apprehension about what will happen in the post-takeover environment," Wagner said. "We are urging members to continue asking all the questions that come to mind and we will continue to provide answers based on the information available to us."

Viterra shareholders vote on the takeover offer on May 29.

Check the GSU web site for updates at [www.gsu.ca](http://www.gsu.ca).



## The inside scoop

Delegates and staff recently returned from GSU's 2012 biennial policy convention. The theme of the convention was **only YOU can make GSU your union.**

GSU members have opportunities to work toward change at their local, membership, and officer meetings, but the greatest opportunity for influence and input is the policy convention. The convention is the overall governing body of GSU and the forum for delegates to debate the issues, and vote on acceptance, amendments, or rejection.

The potential for change is great. For instance, changes instigated by delegates on the convention floor in 2010 raised GSU scholarships from \$1,000 to \$2,000 and made GSU spouses eligible to apply for scholarships. As a result of a resolution at the 2012 convention, GSU will be working to encourage employers to provide defibrillators (AEDs) at work locations.

**GSU is your union.** Take the opportunities available to you to choose the direction of GSU, set your priorities for the future, and to let your elected officers and staff know how you would like your union to be run.



Hugh Wagner  
GSU General Secretary

we have a toll-free  
number for gsu saskatoon!



# GSU News

### Editors

Hugh Wagner  
Lynn Woods-Nordin

### GSU Elected Officers

President Carolyn Illerbrun  
Vice-President Jim Brown  
Vice-President Mandy Windecker  
General-Secretary Hugh Wagner

### GSU Office Locations

2334 McIntyre Street  
Regina, SK S4P 2S2

2154 Airport Drive  
Saskatoon, SK S7L 6M6

### Email Address

gsu.regina@sasktel.net

### Web Page

www.gsu.ca

### Fax Numbers

306.565.3430 Regina  
306.384.1006 Saskatoon

### Phone Numbers

866.522.6686 Toll-free Regina  
306.522.6686 Regina  
855.384.7314 Toll-free Saskatoon  
306.384.7314 Saskatoon

GSU News is produced and printed  
in-house by GSU staff members.

Printed May 4, 2012.

## Upcoming events

### GSU 2012 scholarship deadline July 1, 2012

GSU is offering five \$2,000 scholarships in 2012.

Be sure to get your scholarship application form in to GSU Regina's office by July 1.

Scholarship information and application forms are available on our web page - [www.gsu.ca](http://www.gsu.ca) - or by contacting Brittany at the GSU Regina office.

### SFL Summer Camp Fort Qu'Appelle, SK Aug. 5-11, 2012

Young people aged 13-16 who are daughters and sons of union members are eligible to attend.

For information on the SFL summer camp, visit [www.sfl.sk.ca](http://www.sfl.sk.ca) or contact GSU staff rep Steve Torgerson.

One lucky GSU camper will have their registration paid. Visit our web page - [www.gsu.ca](http://www.gsu.ca) - for details.

### GSU's response to government paper on labour legislation

On May 2 the government of Saskatchewan released its discussion paper on labour legislation in the province. GSU will be making a submission to the Minister of Labour in response.

Read the discussion paper on our web page - [www.gsu.ca](http://www.gsu.ca).

If you have comments you'd like to share, email them to us at [gsu.regina@sasktel.net](mailto:gsu.regina@sasktel.net).

Upcoming events are also posted regularly on the GSU web page at [www.gsu.ca](http://www.gsu.ca).

## Helping local communities

# GSU assists Sask. Association for Rehabilitation of the Brain Injured

GSU members continue to give back to the communities they live and work in through GSU's Community Connection program.

Recently sub-local 1.14 (Wynyard & district) president Garth Bagnall presented his sub-local's donation to Linda Donais, manager of the East Central chapter of the Saskatchewan Association for the Rehabilitation of the Brain Injured (SARBI).

"There are only three of these facilities in Saskatchewan and we are lucky enough to have one here in Kelvington," Bagnall reported. "They are not fully government funded and they rely on donations to keep the operation going. Linda was very grateful and said that it was not often that they get a donation without asking."

*(L-r) SARBI manager Linda Donais accepts GSU sub-local 1.14 donation from sub-local president Garth Bagnall.*



## Local 9 (Chilliwack Feed Mill) prepares to bargain first collective agreement with Hi-Pro Feeds

Getting to this point has been a lengthy process for GSU's newest members. They have been traded, taken-over, and shuffled around in the last few years, but now they are certified members of GSU and they are ready to bargain their first collective agreement and have a say in how they should be treated.

Members met with GSU staff rep Lawrence Maier on April 14 to finalize their bargaining package before they voted to approve the entire package on April 15.

"These new members are great to work with. They are reasonable, hard working, and dedicated employees,"

said GSU staff rep Lawrence Maier.

"They are also united and determined to change the way they have been treated. Management would be wise to listen to them."

Bargaining for GSU's newest Local is getting closer and members are anxious to begin working out a deal. Bargaining dates are expected to be set soon. Staff Rep Lawrence Maier has been in contact with management and preliminary information requested by the union is being prepared.

The local executive and bargaining committee members are chairperson Larry Perry, vice chair Dale Petkau, and secretary-treasurer Janis Newhouse.

### Did you know ...

You have the right to union representation at dismissal or discipline meetings.

GSU will represent you at meetings with management - such as dismissal or discipline meetings. This service is provided to you as part of your union dues and there is no additional charge for assisting you.

## your collective agreement

Familiarize yourself with your collective agreement. It describes the terms and conditions of employment in your workplace.

A copy of your agreement is available by asking your elected union officer, calling the union office, or visiting our web page at [www.gsu.ca](http://www.gsu.ca).

If you have questions about your agreement or how it applies to a situation in your workplace, don't hesitate to contact your Local officers or your GSU staff rep.

All inquiries are confidential. All GSU services are provided to you as part of your union dues.

# GSU's participation in Labour Canada's study of grain dust levels results in lowering of the workplace dust limit

The company spokesperson began his presentation by stating there is no conclusive proof of long term health effects caused by grain dust. That's when former grain buyer and GSU staff rep Lawrence Maier knew it was worth the trip to attend the meeting.

Part 10 of the Canada Occupational Health and Safety Regulations regulates the amount of Hazardous Substances allowable in workplaces. Grain dust is considered a "nuisance dust" by the Code and the level set for exposure to grain dust was 10 mg per cubic metre over an 8-hour period. Through lobbying, and with the agreement of the Government scientific experts, a review of all of the regulations in Part 10 began in 2009 to update the protection given to workers.

On January 18, 2012, federally regulated union and employer representatives gathered in Ottawa.

Grain and flour milling companies had been lobbying to weaken Labour Canada's regulations on tolerable amounts of dust in the air in the workplace, and since GSU represents workers in both industries, we were asked to send a representative to the January 18 meeting.

Lawrence Maier attended as an employee representative to advocate in favour of strong workplace health and safety standards for

workers. Employee representatives also attended from the Canadian Labour Congress, United Food and Commercial Workers, Canadian Union of Public Employees, and Labour Program Representatives who work for the government of Canada - including Health and Safety experts and scientists.

Company representatives at the meeting included BC Maritime Employers Association, Western Grain Elevators Association, Flour Millers Association, and Viterra's Martin Klinger.

Labour Canada experts pointed out a variety of studies – copies of which all committee members had access to – which showed health risks increased above 4 mg of dust per cubic meter (4 mg/M3).

Labour Program and union delegates also made it clear that reducing the dust allowable from 10 mg/M3 to 3 mg/M3 was appropriate and necessary.

While employers were in agreement that 10 mg/M3 was too much, they wouldn't say what they considered an appropriate level to

be. They went on to propose that the level remain at 10 mg/M3 and a study be undertaken to determine if the current maximum needed to be changed.

In the months after the meeting and after further examination, it was determined that no new studies were needed to justify lowering the dust limit to 4 mg/m3 from the current 10 mg/m3.

As directed by Carli Disano, Senior Policy Analyst, Occupational Health and Safety Policy for Labour Canada "There is sufficient data regarding the existing levels of exposure to grain dust in grain elevators from numerous industrial hygiene surveys conducted throughout the years by the Labour Program, and the available literature on health effects has already been reviewed by the Program as well as by the Grain Industry. The proposed exposure limit of 4mg/m3 is consistent with other jurisdictions, including Ontario, Saskatchewan and Quebec. Consequently, we do not believe that further study of this issue is necessary."

It was largely due to GSU's efforts that the former levels of 10 mg/M3 were put into place in the mid-1970s. Once again – nearly 40 years later – GSU is standing up for all grain company workers and fighting for a safer workplace.

## You said what? Questions, observations, and tips from GSU members

**Why do we use the word "grievance" to describe complaints or problems we have at work? That term seems so formal and so old-fashioned.**

Wording is very important in our collective agreements. The wording used in one article must have the same meaning in other articles, and consistency in wording is required for proper interpretation of the agreement.

Wording used in GSU collective agreements is also used by the legal community and in the courtrooms that GSU bases its grievance and arbitration procedures on.

For GSU's purposes, complaints and grievances are very different situations and each has its own specific meaning.

A complaint is less formal. For instance, it can reflect unhappiness at work, a Worker's Compensation issue, or a request for assistance.

A grievance is a formal expression of a complaint. The term grievance isn't unique to unions. It is also used by the legal community.

# Delegates consider Viterra takeover, member dues, and Defense Fund directors at GSU's 2012 policy convention

From March 22 to 24, 2012, elected delegates, union staff and guests attended GSU's 10th Biennial Policy Convention at the Cedar Lodge near Dundurn, Sask.

The convention included an ambitious agenda of work on behalf of GSU as delegates considered the union's audited 2011 financial statements, a budget for 2012, a draft annual report and a series of resolutions on union policy and administration.

Delegates from GSU's newest locals at Advance Engineered Products Ltd. (Regina and Saskatoon) and Hi-Pro Feeds (Chilliwack) were enthusiastically welcomed.

CLC representative Darla Leard brought greetings to the delegates from the Canadian Labour Congress and reported on the labour movement's campaign to reform the Canada Pension Plan.

Errol Eashappie delivered a moving presentation on the ongoing tragedy of missing women in our communities.

Jason Mann from the BC Federation of Labour led a very informative education session on social media and union organizing. An equally informative session on legal trends pertaining to grievances and arbitration was led by GSU's legal counsel Ronni Nordal. Ms. Nordal also answered questions with regard to the impact of the Glencore takeover of Viterra on employee rights, union representation, collective agreement continuation and successor rights under the Canada Labour Code.

A number of guest speakers addressed delegates throughout the convention.

Not surprisingly, the prospect of Viterra being acquired and then being split into three was on the minds of

many delegates to the convention. This subject was the central focus of a meeting of delegates from Local 1 (Viterra Country Operations and Maintenance in Saskatchewan) and Local 2 (Viterra Regina Head Office) which was held in conjunction with the convention on the evening of March 22.

The Local 1 and 2 delegates were briefed as to the potential effects of a division of Viterra's agro and grain handling operations between Glencore, Agrium and Richardson International. A plan of action in response to the impending takeover transactions was discussed and endorsed. This subject then became part of the overall convention deliberations as delegates unanimously approved committing GSU resources to the advancement and protection of employees' collective agreement rights and collective bargaining rights with whomever might become their employer.

Carolyn Illerbrun (Sub-Local 1.16) was re-elected GSU president. Mandy Windecker (Local 5) and Jim Brown (Sub-Local 1.1) were re-elected as GSU's vice presidents, and Hugh Wagner was re-elected as general secretary.

In addition elections were conducted for Directors of the GSU Defense Fund. Congratulations and thank you to Rob Brochu (Sub-Local 1.12), Ron Gerlock (Local 8), Karen Morrison (Local 5), Mike Swenson (Sub-Local 1.2) and Mike Carlin (Sub-Local 1.16) for accepting the additional responsibility.

GSU's annual report, including the 2011 audited financial statements, as approved and adopted by the convention delegates will be issued for the benefit of the general union membership later this spring.

If you would like more information about the GSU convention, contact your Local GSU officer or your staff rep.



(L-r) David Kessel accepts his Samsung tablet from GSU vice president Jim Brown.

GSU members who completed our February 2012 membership survey were entered to win a Samsung tablets. Four winners were drawn at the GSU convention. Congratulations to Colleen Burns, Garth Craig, David Kessel and Jennel Pennington.



## GSU is offering five \$2,000 scholarships to GSU members, their spouses, and their children

The GSU scholarship committee is accepting applications for our 2012 scholarship program.

The scholarship competition is open to GSU members, their spouses, and dependent children who have not previously won.

Scholarship applicants must be enrolled in a diploma, degree, or certificate program at a community college, university, trade school, or technical institute as a full-time student in any country.

GSU members who apply or whose

spouses or children apply must have a signed membership card on file with the union in order to be eligible for GSU scholarships.

Deadline for receipt of scholarship applications is July 1, 2012.

Forms and detailed information about GSU's scholarship program are available from the GSU Regina office or on our web page at [www.gsu.ca](http://www.gsu.ca).

## Return of the Saskatchewan Roughriders and GSU's Riddlemeister

The GSU convention delegates gathered at the March 22 meeting of non-Viterra locals said they liked GSU's Rider ticket giveaways and they wanted the program to continue in 2012. They also indicated they would like to see a riddle added to GSU News. With that in mind, we secured tickets for the 2012 CFL season and dragged an old friend out from hiding.

Is it a bird? Is it a plane? Can't be—it's lying on the sidewalk! Yes, members of GSU, some of you may remember him from long ago. It's the Riddlemeister, and cuts to pensions, Old Age Security, and bottle returns have forced him back on the road.

Also, he burned down his tent during a catastrophic gas-lighting session after an evening of eating refried beans and broccoli.

You might ask what the Rid has been doing all these years, but I wouldn't advise it.

Let's just move on shall we?

Here's your question:

**What English word has three consecutive double letters?**

Send the Rid your answers and he'll send out some prizes. Maybe. Probably. We hope.

Remember, the Riddlemeister's decision is final, even if it's wrong. And creativeness counts so put your thinking caps on.

How about it? Do you know the answer?

Send us your best guess by June 8 and you will have a chance to win two tickets to the Riders June 22 season opener against the Calgary Stampeders.

We've got four tickets so two lucky winners will be able to take a guest to the game. Good luck!



### voicejail

The loop of options where you get stuck when trying to navigate your voice mail.

"I tried changing my phone greeting and I got stuck in voicejail for fifteen minutes."

The urban dictionary is a little nasty, a lot funny, and not for the faint hearted.

You can check it out online at [urbandictionary.com](http://urbandictionary.com).

"The average weekly earnings in Saskatchewan jumped 2.7 per cent from January 2011 to January 2012, making Saskatchewanians some of the highest-paid employees in Canada.

Average weekly earnings came in at \$907.44 during that period."

**Source: Internet: MetroNews.ca - April 2, 2012.**

