

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

April 21, 2020

Good Day,

I hope this finds you well and safe. As we begin another week in this new world that has and is continuing to evolve, we find ourselves operating in a space that no one ever really contemplated. This pandemic has presented challenges that governments, business and your unions were not prepared for and has forced us to all work together to try and weather the storm as best we can.

We have seen layoffs in three of our bargaining units— almost all of our membership in our Edmonton Public Library (EPL) unit and significant layoffs in the City of Edmonton unit. In order to mitigate as much of the financial impact on our members as possible, we negotiated temporary Letters of Understanding in both the City and EPL units which allows those laid-off members to have access to a sub plan to top up EI payments, maintain their medical health benefits, and continue to accrue seniority during the temporary layoff period. It was brought to our attention late last week that there may be some issues when applying for EI with Service Canada. It appears that there may be some confusion between EI, the sub plan process and the federal CERB program. We are working with the City and EPL to try and sort out the confusion as quickly as possible. While I commend our federal government for introducing programs to assist individuals and business through this difficult time, the ad hoc nature of these new programs and the huge number of applicants has caused significant confusion and created problems in the timely access to the different programs.

Meanwhile, our TELUS World of Science - Edmonton (TWOSE) unit has seen almost all of our membership there on layoff without the same financial aid that we were able to negotiate with the City and EPL units due, mainly to the nature of the business. The Union has been working with the management group at the TWOSE unit to access some federal funding for laid off employees. We hope to have some news on that in the next couple of days.

Our Capital Power and EPCOR units continue to operate as near normal without layoffs at this point.

I think it is evident that as this emergency continues, we are almost certain to see further levels of layoff, particularly in our City unit as the City's future revenue projections are seemingly very bleak. The Coalition of Edmonton Civic Unions continues to lobby Council on how spending is done, but that effort would be much more effective if you, the member and taxpayer, were to call your Councillor and express your opinion on how and where your tax dollars are spent.

I will be updating our Membership on a regular basis as information becomes available. Please check our website or your personal email (to subscribe online, visit our [homepage](#) and complete the 'Sign-up for e-Newsletters' form).

***Thank you and stay safe,
Lanny Chudyk***

