



UFCW rejects offer again despite improvements made by Saskatoon Co-op

(Nov. 3, 2018) – Bargaining continued yesterday between Saskatoon Co-op and UFCW Local 1400. Saskatoon Co-op improved its offer with an even higher wage increase for its employees, but the Union has chosen to walk away from this most recent offer.

“Saskatoon Co-op has and will provide generous and fair compensation to our employees and we’ll continue working toward an agreement,” said Grant Wicks, CEO of Saskatoon Co-op. “To be clear, we’re not reducing the wages of our current employees and we’ve offered industry-leading increases of two per cent per year.

Adjusted wage scales for new employees are common in the retail industry. This structure has been used for many years by Saskatoon Co-op’s competitors, many of which are also represented by UFCW Local 1400. Saskatoon Co-op is a different kind of business because it’s a co-operative, which is why the proposed wage for new employees is still considerably above our unionized competitors’ wages and there is gender pay equity.

“We hire qualified individuals for our positions; there is no difference in wages based on gender,” said Wicks. “In 2017, we hired about the same number of male and female in-scope employees, so there is no reason to believe this wage structure would create wage disparity between genders.”

Even though it is a co-operative, Saskatoon Co-op is still a business that operates in a highly-competitive environment. Competitors have taken steps to lower their operating costs by implementing adjusted wage scales since as early as 1995. With staffing accounting for 60 per cent of expenses, Saskatoon Co-op needs to control operating costs in order to be competitive and ensure it can continue to serve its members and customers.

Saskatoon Co-op is an independent business

Saskatoon Co-op is one of more than 170 independent businesses across Western Canada that are members and owners of Federated Co-operatives Limited (FCL). Also based in Saskatoon, FCL provides central wholesaling, manufacturing and support services to Saskatoon Co-op and these other co-operatives.

“People might see some big numbers coming from FCL and attribute them to Saskatoon Co-op, but our revenues are not FCL’s revenues,” said Wicks. “Saskatoon Co-op is owned and governed by members in our local community and any profits generated are returned to members and the community.”

Saskatoon Co-op is committed to providing essential services—including pharmacy—and serving its customers and members throughout the strike. Most locations will remain open for members and customers. For updates to our operating hours, please visit our website at www.saskatoonco-op.crs.



About Saskatoon Co-op

Saskatoon Co-op is a retail co-operative that has proudly served Saskatoon and area for more than 82 years. Today, Saskatoon Co-op serves more than 116,000 members — and many more customers — in Saskatoon, Warman, Martensville, Colonsay and Watrous where it operates 30 locations. Since 2013, Saskatoon Co-op has returned more than \$53 million to its members in cash back and equity and paid over \$215 million in wages, while contributing over \$2.5 million to community organizations and initiatives.

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