

## **Organizing Canada Cartage**

**Local 31 Blazes an Organizing Trail through the Yukon Territory and British Columbia** - November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016

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For over a year, Teamsters Local Union No. 31 has endeavored to organize Canada Cartage System throughout British Columbia and Yukon Territory. Through the leadership of President Stan Hennessy and Organizer Ben Hennessy, Local 31 has accomplished its goal and we are proud to welcome our new drivers into the International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Several years ago, Canada Cartage began to perform business in Vancouver, BC. The Teamsters recognized the company's rapid growth in Freight Transportation and immediately initiated an organizing drive on the recommendation of then Teamsters Canada President, Bob Bouvier.

In due course, Local 31's Provincial and Territorial organizing drive of Canada Cartage proved to be a success!

At first, Local 31 was certified to represent Drivers and Warehousemen in Vancouver. The Local battled through collective bargaining and negotiated a first collective agreement. Shortly thereafter, the owner-operator Drivers in Vancouver successfully joined up and after several months negotiating a Teamsters contract was ratified.

Now, Teamster Local Union No. 31 members were clearly benefactors to increased wages, Teamsters Health & Welfare, Teamsters Pension Plan and Teamsters representation at the workplace.

Our organizing drive headed north to the Yukon Territory. Drivers in Whitehorse were not receiving benefits comparable to the Teamster members in Vancouver nor wages to justify the rugged, dangerous

driving conditions that meet northern drivers around every bend of mountain highway. Business Rep. Tom Brown chaired bargaining along with Linehaul Driver, Ken Artimenko. After concluding bargaining in Federal Conciliation, our Whitehorse Brothers ratified their first Teamsters agreement unanimously by 100%.

The organizing drive continued. Drivers in Prince George said “Yes” to the Teamsters. The Prince George Drivers perform city and highway linehaul work. On a regular basis, linehaul trips route as far west as Prince Rupert and as far south as Vancouver. In other words, these drivers are Highway Warriors! Currently, the Local is at the bargaining table with Business Rep. Anthony Kirk and Driver, Brandt Markwara negotiating a first Teamsters collective agreement.

Continuing forward, the Teamsters were contacted by Drivers in the Thompson Okanagan. Immediately Local 31 got to work and successfully certified Drivers in Kamloops, Vernon, Kelowna and Westbank (West Kelowna). Drivers at these locations work long hours performing flatdeck work and operate curbside delivery equipment on behalf of a major hardware company. Business Rep. Paul Simms along with Driver, Scott Porritt will commence collective bargaining very soon.

### **Local 31 Gives CLAC the Boot!**

One more location was on our radar; Vancouver Island. The Island Drivers were represented by CLAC. Belonging outside the “House of Labour” i.e.: (Canadian Labour Congress); CLAC has continually cozied up to employers and does not represent members directly at the workplace. In fact, Island Drivers had not seen a CLAC representative for years and were tired of CLAC inferior wages and Health and Welfare benefits.

By the conditions set forth by the *Canada Labour Code*, a Local 31 organizing drive to represent the workers could not commence until October 2016. Nonetheless, the Organizing Department developed a strategy and carried out its plans.

On Friday, November 18<sup>th</sup>, Local 31 gave CLAC the boot! Business Rep. Tom Brown scouted the Island locating drivers in a good old fashion one-at-a-time card signing. In the end, Teamster grit and determination won the support of the Vancouver Island Drivers. President Stan Hennessy has now assigned Brother Tom Brown to negotiate a collective agreement.

Teamsters Local Union No. 31 proudly represents 300 members at Canada Cartage System all through British Columbia and Yukon Territory. Local 31 would like to thank the workers who helped with the organizing drive and who ultimately contributed to making working conditions better for everyone.

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