

Blair Winger, Vice-President (Alberta and the North)

I have had the privilege of being VP AB/North for the past two and one half years since the retirement of my predecessor Sister Marie Kennedy. My desire when stepping into the position was to try and encourage open and honest dialogue within the region and strengthen our ties with the rest of the prairies. I believe we have succeeded in unifying our region, and the Prairie region as a whole. The last Council of Locals held this spring in Yellowknife was evidence of the cooperation and mutual respect shown between Alberta/North and Manitoba/Saskatchewan locals. This is good for the region and good for the union as a whole. With a majority government in place we will need to focus our efforts towards dealing with the employer, and shift away from internal disagreements which are costly and time consuming. We need to present a unified voice to the employer, or they will continue to use the divide and conquer technique to their advantage, and our detriment.

I served as a member of the standing Finance committee with Sister Graham and Brother Turcq (Chair). I was the OPI for the National EAP Advisory Committee and was a vocal proponent of the continuation of the RA system and opponent of the proposed 1-800 system. I served as OPI for the FR Steering and FR Wellness Committees and have seen the union role increase greatly in dealings with the CFFM's office. This ability to have input into the decision making process, although frustrating at times, will pay off for our FR members in the long run. If we aren't at the table, our voices will not be heard.

I have provided updates prior to each NE meeting during my time in office for all the committees I am responsible for, and they are available on the UNDE website. Although I have enjoyed my time as VP, and my time spent talking to the membership and interacting with the rest of the National Executive, I feel it is time to step back and allow someone with new ideas and abilities to step up and continue to move our union forward. I would like to thank my spouse, June, for her support, and the members of the region for their patience and dedication. Additionally, I would like to thank all those in the UNDE National Office for their advice and guidance.

Blair Winger
VP AB/North