

**REPORT OF THE  
NATIONAL PRESIDENT  
TO THE  
17<sup>TH</sup> TRIENNIAL NATIONAL CONVENTION  
UNION OF SOLICITOR GENERAL EMPLOYEES**

**STAN STAPLETON**



## **Introduction:**

When I was elected in July 2014, I made the following promises to the USGE membership. I promised I would:

- Increase the democracy, accountability and transparency of USGE,
- Increase the mobilization and engagement of our members, and
- Modernize the organization.

I am pleased to report that between 2014 and 2017, I believe we have made great strides in these areas. We have been able to do so because of the tremendous work of our Local Executive members, our Regional Vice-Presidents and our staff. I am extremely proud of the dedicated, talented and caring group of individuals who make up USGE and of the work that we have accomplished together over the past three years.

The goal of this work is always to meet our organization's objectives including one of our key objectives, namely to:

*"obtain and uphold ... for all members the best possible standards of wages, salaries and other conditions of employment and to protect their interests, rights, benefits and privileges".*

Please find below the highlights of our work between July 2014 and June 2017.

## President's Office

### **Speaking with members across the country**

During my mandate as President of USGE, I have traveled across the country, visiting every single province and territory, so as to meet as wide a variety of members as possible. These visits have been an opportunity to learn more about the work our members do every day to keep our communities safe. During these visits, members have often shared some of their difficult, challenging and meaningful work experiences and the impact these have on them, their colleagues, their families and friends.



In addition, members have often engaged me to freely express their concerns, and to provide feedback on many of the issues that USGE has been addressing. Many have also expressed their thanks for the good work that USGE representatives at all levels have done. I am truly appreciative of the work of so many.

### My commitment to speaking French

In an effort to be able to communicate with all our members, since becoming President, I have made a commitment to improving my French. While I had hoped that my French lessons would have improved my capacity more noticeably, I am pleased that I was able to deliver the opening address to our Local President's Meeting in 2015 entirely in French, as well as being able to open other subsequent meetings in both English and French. Further, I have begun to be able to better

understand members when they are speaking French. While my French may not have improved as much as I had hoped, my commitment to improving my French is unwavering.

### The importance of transparency

Whether in meetings with members, Local Executives or Regional Vice-Presidents, I encourage all to ask me whatever questions they may have and I am committed to answering honestly, to the best of my knowledge. I firmly believe in the value of transparency and have encouraged USGE members to support decisions that they favour and to challenge decisions if they are in

disagreement. In my opinion, this has led to excellent discussions and what I believe to be strong decisions and deeper member engagement throughout USGE.

### Newly active members

Throughout my travels, I have begun to hear of once empty Local Executive positions being filled by newly active members. As we continue to build USGE, I am hopeful that this trend will continue.

### **USGE's Increased democracy**

Following on the feedback that Regional Vice-Presidents wanted, and expected, to be more involved in truly running our union, one of the first things we undertook together was to strike additional Executive committees. Up until that point, USGE had benefitted from the following committees which continued to be active during the 2014-2017 timeframe:



- Education
- Convention
- Operational Group Structure
- Organizing the Locals

During the fall of 2014, the following Executive Committees were struck:

- Personnel
- Finance
- Equity
- Mobilization
- Communications

Committee members (both Executive members and Local Executive members) worked hard to provide their feedback

and guidance to USGE on the key issues that their committees addressed. This increased democratic participation is responsible for a number of the significant strides forward that USGE has made over this period. Thank you to all Executive Committee members who shared their insights, talents, time and dedication to USGE in this way.

## Two PSLREB rulings in favour of USGE

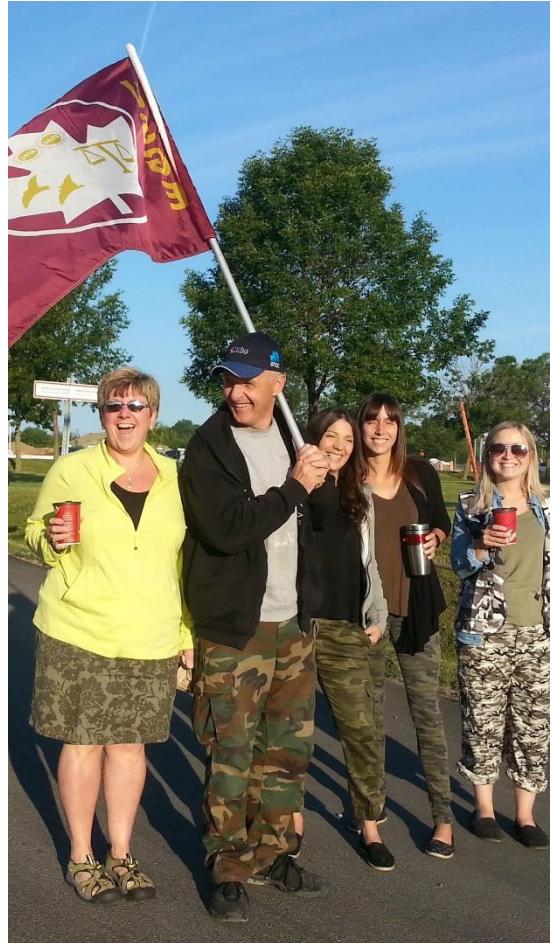
One of the most important things that USGE can accomplish for our members is, of course, securing important workplace protections for them. During these past three years, two such issues went to the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board for decision. Both rulings came back in our members' favour:

### Cook-Chill: Ensuring salary protection for Food Service Workers

Summary: In 2015, the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board (PSLRB) ruled in favour of USGE and PSAC and against CSC for its handling of the Food Services employees whose jobs were eliminated due to the Cook-Chill Program. Our USGE Labour Relations team worked closely with PSAC, as well as representatives of CSC and the Treasury Board Secretariat to settle over 100 grievances to the satisfaction of our members. Any member who is now occupying a FOS-03 position, or occupying any other position due to the implementation of the Cook-Chill program is now salary protected, contrary to CSC's initial position on the matter.

Background: In 2012, Correctional Service Canada moved to centralize its food services for 29 of its 57 institutions by establishing food production centres where meals would be prepared, chilled and distributed for subsequent re-heating. This resulted in changes to the number and type of Food Service worker (FOS) positions required. Correctional Service Canada strongly encouraged USGE members and food services workers who were not selected for comparable employment to resign with the option to re-apply for lower level positions that paid just two thirds as much as their previous jobs. CSC announced that salary protection would be limited to just those attaining positions that were one level lower.

USGE worked closely with PSAC in putting forward a Policy Grievance for FOSs and in support of the black armband campaign, an initiative of members across the country to bring attention to this issue. In addition, we outreached to Howard Sapers, Canada's Correctional Investigator, who shared his concerns about the issues surrounding the implementation of the Cook-Chill program.



In its decision, the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board (PSLREB) concluded that Correctional Service Canada was wrong when they announced that salary protection would be limited to just those attaining positions that were one level lower. The adjudicator agreed with USGE and PSAC that CSC had indeed violated the collective agreement.

Subsequent to this ruling, USGE and the employer reviewed food services jobs on a case by case basis to determine which job offers were reasonable and subject to full salary protection. This significantly opened up the range of reasonable job offers for surplus employees. In addition, USGE and PSAC also reviewed cases where salary protection had been unfairly denied to food services workers. In these cases, an adjustment to the employee's previous salary level, with retroactivity for lost wages, was ensured. Through this work, over 100 grievances were settled to the satisfaction of the USGE membership.



### NAMP: Protecting members with disabilities & those who require family and bereavement leave

Summary: In 2016, the Public Service Labour Relations and Employment Board ruled again in favour of USGE and PSAC and against CSC, finding the National Attendance Management Plan (NAMP) to be discriminatory towards employees seeking leave on the grounds of disability or family status. While USGE is aware that the government may appeal this decision, we believe the present ruling will stand.

Background: Adopted in 2011 by CSC, the National Attendance Management Program (NAMP) was intended to boost employee attendance by giving managers the right to compare the amount of leave a person was taking throughout the year against an average provided by the department, also known as a threshold. Managers would then meet with a CSC employee who was nearing the threshold to discuss his/her attendance record, even when employees had not come close to using the maximum number of days of leave to which they were entitled. Subsequent to these meetings, a letter was put on the employee's file.

USGE argued, through the grievance process, that CSC's Attendance Management Program was arbitrary, discriminatory and violated the collective agreement. This is particularly the case for those Correctional employees who require family and bereavement leave, as well as those employees with a disability.

The Public Service Labour Relations and Employee Board ruled again in USGE's favour citing the NAMP to be discriminatory towards employees seeking leave on the grounds of disability or family status.

## **Welcoming our new RCMP Civilian Members**

For some time, USGE has been aware that we will be welcoming approximately 1,000 new members when Civilian Members (CMs) of the RCMP are transferred to the federal public service. USGE's Occupational Group Structures Committee has been extremely active during this time in both creating, and implementing, an action plan designed to address how USGE could best plan for and welcome our new members.



Based on this action plan, in September 2015, we launched our "Welcome Civilian Members" webpage that has been very helpful in providing RCMP Civilian Members with information about our union. This webpage also allows new members to ask us questions and to sign up for alerts so they're aware every time we post new information.

In addition, a number of our Regional Vice-Presidents and Local Presidents have been offering introductory sessions to Civilian

Members, and answering any questions they may have.

There is also a possibility that an additional 1,000 CMs will become USGE members, if they choose USGE/PSAC as their bargaining agent. PSAC, with support from USGE RCMP RVPs and Local Presidents, has been involved in a campaign to organize this group of Civilian Members who,

unlike the CMs who will definitely become our members, were not assigned a public service occupational group.

The RCMP announced in February 2017, that the transfer date (or deeming date) will be April 26<sup>th</sup>, 2018. USGE looks forward to welcoming, and effectively representing, our new CM members.

### **Phoenix: The debacle**

Clearly, one of the worst situations to persist for our members over this time has been the fiasco of the Phoenix pay system. We have all managed calls, emails, and Facebook posts regarding the implementation of this significantly flawed system and its extremely detrimental results on our members. We have posted articles on our website, encouraged members to write to Minister Judy Foote, reminded members that pay centre employees are PSAC members too, and hosted a “thank you” event for pay centre employees in Miramichi. We will continue to do all that we can for members in this area.



### **Representing USGE members with their employers**

Representing members in 17 different federal departments is always our most important task. During these three years, I have ensured that I or a USGE representative has been at the table for each of the huge majority of National Labour Management Consultation Committee meetings of each of the 17 departments. I would like to thank the Regional Vice-Presidents who have represented us at these tables when I have been unable to do so.

In addition, I am pleased to say that over the course of my mandate, I have met privately with Minister Blaney, and Minister Goodale, as well as Deputy Ministers, and Commissioners responsible for the great majority of our departments.

### **Ongoing repercussions of DRAP**

One of the overall issues I have raised a number of times in a number of ways in these meetings has been the Deficit Reduction Action Plan (DRAP) and its repercussions on our members.

USGE members from all departments have felt the sting of DRAP but members within CSC have paid a particularly heavy price. Consequently, we have received repeated requests to address it head on. CSC was required to implement significantly higher percentage cuts to their departmental budget than many other departments. The fallout from these cuts has been considerable – and has resulted in notable concerns about the constraints our members are facing in ensuring that public safety goals are met when offenders reach the street. This is, unquestionably, a concern for all Canadians.

As a result, we continue to raise issues related to increasing caseloads and workloads that USGE Parole Officers are facing, reduced staffing as a result of the new Cook-Chill program, as well as a reduction of hours for term staff, not to mention other concerns resulting from the implementation of DRAP. In addition, with the notable reductions in support staff, we are very concerned about the capacity of Parole Officers and others to meet the legal requirements of their jobs, if they are not more appropriately resourced.

### **USGE's 17 departments**



Please see below for the 17 different departments in which our members work and key accomplishments in each area:

#### **Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada (ATSSC)**

USGE has closely monitored the establishment of the Chairpersons' Committee, the new governance structure, which is comprised of three sub-committees (Operations, Performance

and Reporting, and Resources) to address organizational issues in a consistent and coherent fashion, and the outcomes of ATSSC's Peer Recognition Award Program.

### Canadian Security Intelligence Service

USGE is working closely with PSAC to move collective agreement negotiations forward for our members who work at the Canadian Security Intelligence Service. We trust that a good agreement will be signed by the end of the year, one which will include improvements over and above the results of other tables.

### Canadian Human Rights Commission

Throughout the past three years, USGE has addressed a variety of issues with the employer, including the use of term positions, the expansion of tele-work (and the supports required), as well as the employment equity policy. USGE is also monitoring related developments regarding the new initiative to combat violence in the workplace (and how it relates to the standard policy) and the Commission's Learning Policy, as well as the new strategic plan. Finally, USGE has sought to ensure that the experiences of vicarious trauma among employees at the Commission is properly recognized and the right supports are in place.



### Canadian Human Rights Tribunal

USGE's members have seen dramatic changes to this department since the consolidation of 12 administrative tribunals into one called the Administrative Tribunals Support Service of Canada (ATSSC). Only CHRT employees are currently USGE members; the remaining employees belong to the National Component of the PSAC.

Apart from the regular issues, USGE has been quite concerned with how issues of harassment and violence in the workplace are addressed should there be a problem with specific Tribunal members who are GIC appointees. USGE has advocated that a clear and viable process is imperative. USGE knows that our members may be especially vulnerable if there is an issue with a Member (GIC) of one of the Tribunals.

## Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP

During this period, USGE worked successfully with the Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP through their process of closing their Surrey office. I am pleased to report that all Workforce Adjusted member cases were resolved successfully.

## Commissioner of Canada Elections

We were pleased to welcome employees of the Commissioner of Canada Elections to USGE in 2016. We look forward to working with these new members, to better understanding the variety of work they do, and to representing them well to resolve employer related issues.

## Correctional Service Canada (CSC):

Throughout my tenure, David Neufeld and I have insisted on a number of meetings with the CSC leadership to highlight a variety of issues including the following:

### **Bringing attention to the Elimination of the Community Correctional Liaison Officers (CCLOs)**

In 2014, Correctional Service Canada announced that an important support position for CSC's Parole officers was being terminated nationally due to budgetary constraints. This was extremely concerning for members of the Correctional Services Canada – and beyond. Community



Corrections Liaison Officers (CCLOs) were part of an innovative Integrated Police and Parole Initiative across the country. CCLOs were often reputable police officers from the RCMP and other local policing agencies across the country. The Community Correctional Liaison Officer positions were created to enhance the working relationships between CSC and police forces across Canada. They have worked alongside Parole Officers since 2006/2007 throughout the country.

Due to the fact that CCLOs were highly involved in the supervision, monitoring and apprehension of offenders who are released into the community, they offered crucial support to CSC Parole officers in the locations where they were active. Consequently, we felt it was important to draw attention to this development. While reinstating this program would mean absolutely no job gains for USGE members, it would enable the strong relationships that have been developed

between police forces and community parole officers to continue – for the benefit of all Canadians.

With this in mind, the National Office shared information and supported, where possible, the efforts of Parole Officers who organized info pickets, media interviews and related actions throughout the country.

We will continue to share information about this program with elected representatives and others with our belief that this program (or a similar one) should be reinstituted as soon as possible.

### **Making USGE concerns known regarding disrespectful managers**

Over the last number of years, USGE members and leaders have had the unfortunate experience of working with a significantly disrespectful CSC senior manager. After insisting on a number of meetings with the CSC Commissioner and Assistant Commissioner, this individual has been redeployed within CSC where his duties will not entail working as closely with our members. This is a victory for our members and has sent a strong message to CSC that USGE will not tolerate disrespectful managers.

### **ACCSO: Protecting an important forum in which to discuss Community Staff safety**

In 2016, we addressed an apparent initiative on the part of CSC to disband the Advisory Committee on Community Staff Safety. Writing a letter directly to the CSC Commissioner, copied to Minister Ralph Goodale, resulted in an immediate meeting with the CSC Commissioner, Don Head and the re-invigoration of a USGE/CSC committee designed to address the safety concerns of our community parole officers. While in the past, we co-chaired this committee with an Assistant Commissioner, the Co-Chair of this new committee is the Commissioner himself, which will bring needed weight to the committee's decisions within CSC. The committee's new name is: the Advisory Committee on Community Safety and Operations

Other issues that were critical to our relationship with CSC over the past three years have been covered in different parts of this report. They include: [NAMP](#), [DRAP](#), [Vulnerable and Impacted Employees](#), our presentation to the House of Commons Committee on Public Safety, and my [op-eds](#) on 1/ parole's serving a purpose and 2/ the importance of prison farms.



### Courts Administration Service

Unfortunately, there continue to be significant difficulties in the Courts Administration Service. USGE is working closely with our Local and management to resolve these issues.

### Department of Justice Canada

Presently the Department of Justice Canada is undertaking a review of the administrative support to legal services and policy work within the department. We look forward to reviewing the results



of this and ensuring that our members work is properly reflected and respected.

### Office of the Information Commissioner of Canada & Office of the Privacy Commissioner

USGE has been closely monitoring a number of developments, including the commitment to improve communication with staff on the part of the employer, the protocol for injuries in the workplace, and the development of the potential New Employee Orientation Program which could offer mandatory training as well as an overview of the key policies to which new employees should pay particular attention.

### Parole Board of Canada

USGE has been monitoring the National Generic Work Description Review that has been taking place at the Parole Board of Canada (PBC) to ensure that all work descriptions are accurate.

In addition, in September of 2016, USGE hosted a meeting with the Executive Director of the Parole Board of Canada to directly address concerns raised by a number of Parole Officers in Quebec and elsewhere that they were being pressured to recommend the release of offenders, against their own judgement. In other cases, the PBC seemed to be blatantly disregarding the recommendations of Parole Officers, sometimes resulting in a lack of respect from inmates towards their POs. The meeting allowed for a frank exchange of information and views which will allow PBC management and USGE members to better work together.

## Public Prosecution Services Canada

USGE has represented our members' interests given a number of significant changes and issues that have arisen as it relates to PPSC's Disability Management Policy, some gaps in training for health and safety committee members (among others), the development of a mental health strategy and hazard prevention program, employment equity considerations (particularly as it relates to women), and improvements to the Joint Learning Program (where there is an opportunity for USGE members to play a leadership role in promoting a Harassment Free Workplace). Additionally, with the agreement of USGE, the employer implemented an Electronic Grievance Response. The results from an internal Employee Survey underscore that many employees would benefit from more information on the role of USGE in supporting them before and at the grievance level.

## Department of Public Safety

USGE has brought forward a number of concerns and issues including Committee members' access to occupational health and safety training through PWGSC, the realignment of departmental functions, as well as the resolution of outstanding pay issues through Phoenix for which a new Human Resources and Finance team is in place.

There is no doubt that USGE's members have been part of a significant change in the organizational culture of Public Safety, including in the establishment of a Culture Connect Group and the addition of a new Financial and Human Resources Instrument of Delegation. USGE has been closely monitoring these developments for their impacts on our members. The development of a Mental Health Action Plan is another issue of relevance, particularly as to how it functions vis a vis the Occupational Health and Safety National Committees.

## Royal Canadian Mounted Police

During my meetings with the RCMP and other departments, we have worked together to resolve pay issues and a number of difficult personal member issues successfully. In addition, we have addressed the following issues:



### **RCMP Class action suits**

On October 6, 2016, RCMP Commissioner Bob Paulson announced that the RCMP was settling a lawsuit filed by two Regular Members who had suffered discrimination and sexual harassment during their careers. The RCMP committed \$100 million dollars to the settlement which will cover gender or sexual orientation based harassment that occurred between September 16, 1974 to the date the settlement received court approval (May 31st, 2017). Any female Public Service Employee, Regular or Civilian Member of the RCMP who has suffered this type of harassment could be eligible to participate in the settlement.

As soon as the provisional settlement was announced in October 2016, USGE offered support for current and former Public Service Employees of the RCMP who were considering participating in the class action settlement. To date, USGE national office has received numerous inquiries about the settlement and has helped members to navigate and understand the complicated settlement process.

### **Civilian Review and Complaints Commission for the RCMP's Report into Workplace Harassment in the RCMP**

In 2016, USGE National President along with RCMP RVPs participated in the CRCC's investigation into workplace harassment in the RCMP. Published in May 2017, the report states that, despite numerous external and internal reviews, the RCMP has failed to 'come to grips' with the problem of harassment. The CRCC blames the RCMP's dysfunctional organizational culture, lack of effective leadership, and problems with the organizational structure as root causes for the lack of action.



While the CRCC report calls on the federal government to make the necessary changes to improve working conditions by modernizing and civilianizing some aspects of the RCMP's administrative management, USGE is monitoring the situation and will intervene in any process in order to best represent the interests of our members.

## The Administrative Support Positions Review (ASPR)

While the fact that the ASPR was delayed a number of times was frustrating for many of our members, USGE felt it was important to ensure that all affected members had an opportunity to provide feedback on their work descriptions. I am pleased that the ASPR is now completed and that we are dealing with the resulting grievances.

## USGE/RCMP Wellness Review of Division C

In March of 2017, USGE collaborated with the RCMP in undertaking a wellness review of two departments within Division C. This wellness review was triggered when our USGE RVP brought forward some very concerning information regarding inappropriate language used by the Division's Commanding Officer. I immediately communicated with Commissioner Paulson and two face to face meetings were immediately had. USGE and the employer each sent a team of interviewers to engage with employees in the Division to better understand the state of the workplace and whether harassment was widespread.

The results of the review indicated that while our members overall reported that they were happy in their workplace, and while the majority of employees understood part of the definition



of harassment, a large majority of the employees and managers showed a significant lack of understanding of a full definition of harassment.

The report, authored by both the RCMP and USGE, recommends immediate additional training for the Commanding Officer, the managers and all employees. In addition, it praises USGE for its work to bring this situation to light.

Office of the Commissioner for Federal Judicial Affairs & Supreme Court of Canada

USGE representatives worked to resolve a number of individual grievances throughout the past three years in both these departments and looks forward to supporting our members further.

## Staffing and Workplace Culture

Of course, one of the key issues for any leader is the staffing and workplace culture that exists in the workplace. In August 2014, I began a review of our priorities and our human resources. The consulting firm OTUS was hired to provide us with an in-depth analysis of our financial management, procedures, and best ways forward to create an accountable and transparent organization.

In 2014, our interim Director of Labour Relations (Fred Sadori) was joined by a Director of Policy, Programs and Media (Nancy Peckford), and in early 2015, the management team was rounded out with the addition of a Director of Finance and Administration (Christina Hatchard). They are joined by a hard-working team who is committed to meeting USGE's goals.

In 2015, USGE negotiated a new collective agreement with our staff. The agreement is fair, provides a modest salary increase, reflective of what our members will likely receive, and allows for more flexible work hours, giving staff the ability to create better work/life balance.

In addition, over the three years, David Neufeld and I have hosted two staff retreats in an effort to build a healthy work environment for all USGE staff.

I will now focus on the priorities we had identified for each department and the outcomes we have achieved.

## Labour Relations & Information Management

When I assumed the position of President, one of my main priorities was to reduce the tremendous backlog of grievances and ensure that we significantly streamlined our grievance handling process.

### Ensuring accurate grievance numbers

As of August 2014, there were well over 2,500 outstanding grievances at the third level. We were unable to know the exact number because, at that time, our information in Unionware was not accurate, with Unionware reports unable to capture hundreds of grievances. Due to the above, it was clear to me that it was



critical for grievance handling to become front and centre to the work of National Office.

I immediately allocated resources to implement Unionware more fully so that it would be possible to better manage and track our progress. In November 2014, we hired a Case Management Assistant to focus on this work and by May 2015, our numbers were significantly more precise. I am pleased to report that our Unionware grievance information is now fully accurate

## **Reducing the grievance backlog**

Also in 2014, knowing that half of the CSC grievances were in Quebec, I immediately hired Claude Duchesneau due to his exceptional experience and knowledge of Quebec Corrections. Brother Duchesneau was able to effectively address the majority of this backlog in just over a year.

In fact, within the first two years of my mandate, and under the leadership of Fred Sadori and that of the overall Labour Relations team, USGE was able to significantly reduce the number of outstanding grievances in all regions.

At present, we are dealing with just slightly over 1,000 grievances in the office. 38% (540) are to do with Acting Pay, 22% (314) are in regards to Job Descriptions, 11% (155) relate to Phoenix, and 7% (104) relate to PFA. While I look forward to that number continuing to diminish, I am pleased with the significant improvements we've made in this area to date.

## **Delays at CSC**

One of the challenges we encountered in grievance handling during this period is the marked delays on the part of Correctional Service Canada in providing final level responses. This has remained a “catch 22” for USGE as the PSAC Grievance and Adjudication unit prefers to have final level responses prior to accepting files. We have forcefully brought this to the attention of the CSC Commissioner and have been assured that recently hired staff will begin to resolve this CSC backlog. We will remain vigilant on this issue.



## Modernizations

In addition to our increased accuracy regarding our grievance numbers in Unionware, and our reduction in the grievance backlog, I am pleased to report on the following modernizations in this department:



### New grievance handling model

As you know, since my election, we have been committed to a new grievance handling model so that those individuals filing grievances can be more involved in their resolution. To this end, we have changed our practices so that individuals filing grievances are able, should they wish, to attend their hearings. This has

been a meaningful development for many of our members who, for many reasons, feel it is crucial that they be part of the process.

### Grievance work becomes paper free

In regards to our information management team, I am pleased to report that our staff have done some terrific work with Unionware and the office is now paper free in relation to grievances. We are also working with the PSAC to bring in more Unionware Modules so we can provide RVPs, and eventually locals, access to information on the system and allow members and Locals to change personal, or Local, information.

Some of the other areas of importance in our Labour Relations work are detailed below:

## Vulnerable and Impacted Employees

The term “vulnerable employees” is the newest designation departments are using to describe employees working in areas where the department is restructuring and reducing positions but does not want to declare any employees affected. This is an issue that has affected many employees within Correctional Service Canada and is an issue we have brought up repeatedly with their senior management team. USGE has insisted all departments provide lists of “vulnerable employees” and have been advising employees not to accept any positions at a lower level as they will not be salary protected.

USGE fully recognizes the precarious position the designation of “vulnerable employee” creates for many of our members and we do not support its use due to the employment vulnerability it creates for many federal public servants, many of whom are women and younger employees. This term has also contributed to a perceived hierarchy among employees in terms of

employment status which can negatively affect the workplace, and a sense of solidarity. We will continue to monitor this issue and speak out against it.

## **Innovations to USGE's Education Program**

Upon my election, it was also a priority of mine to introduce reforms to USGE's Education program to ensure responsive training that is customized to the needs of members and Locals and is delivered quickly.

### **A new educational model**

After USGE's 2014 Triennial Convention reduced our education budget by 50%, we had no choice but to introduce a new training and education model for members and local Presidents. This new model, directed training, enables USGE to be more responsive to the needs of all of our USGE Locals. Quite simply, through this model, USGE is able to offer more trainings, more often, based upon the needs of Locals.



This new format also has the advantage of addressing a number of frustrations that were shared by representatives in the past. Some shared that they had to miss USGE trainings because they were unable to spend 2-4 days away from home. Others expressed frustration that they couldn't participate because the number of delegates that USGE Locals were able to send was too restrictive.

To address these issues, in my first year, USGE piloted a Directed Training program. To support this new model, USGE's labour relations team developed a library with different "one day modules" that Labour Relation Officers, and other staff could use to deliver training. During my mandate, both directed training sessions and original training sessions were offered. Participants rated both types of training highly, with directed trainings receiving slightly higher ratings.

The system to organize training was streamlined as well during this period. When RVPs become aware of the need for training among their membership, they communicate directly with their respective Labour Relations Officer. The RVP and LRO then determine topics and dates, and from there, the USGE Operations team arranges logistics. This new streamlined system seems to be allowing for easy and effective coordination of trainings.

USGE continues to cover participant costs related to attending the directed training, including lost wages, of course. However, by bringing the training closer to where more of USGE's members

live, it enables those members who are unable to travel or to take time away from their families and communities the opportunity to attend.

USGE's priority, as always, is to create an environment where more union representatives and members develop a better understanding of their rights and responsibilities, and are motivated as USGE leaders to improve their working environments. Additionally, the more dynamic and condensed format of the directed trainings has meant that USGE has been far more effective with fewer financial resources. Between 2014 and 2017, we have offered over 80 trainings across the country.



Finally, USGE has sought to ensure that those members who participate in the Grievance Handling sessions have an in depth understanding of the grievance process. Evaluations show that many local USGE leaders are showing significant improvement in the quality of the grievances that they are submitting.

While we have received positive feedback on our new training format, we are aware that improvements are still necessary. I am convinced that USGE will continue to innovate so that USGE's training program meets the needs of our members, our executive and our organization.

## **Labour Relations Conclusion**

As I mentioned above, when I became President, there were over 2,500 grievances to process. Within 18 months, the overwhelming majority of these were resolved. It took concerted focus, the modernization of our data management systems, and significant leadership to get USGE closer and closer to a place where we can now address most grievances efficiently and in a timely member, as our members expect.

To do this, we have added talented and dedicated staff to our strong labour relations team, and ensured that our Head of Information Management had the time and skills required to keep

excellent records of every grievance. In addition, I have personally overseen the resolution of more serious grievances, and have been in constant contact with our labour relations team. It is because of our shared commitment to resolving the grievances of USGE's members that we have been able to make significant progress in a relatively short period of time.

I am very proud of the transformation that has been undertaken in the Labour Relations department at USGE's national office. At the same time, I look forward to seeing additional improvements in the evolution of this important work that we do on behalf of our members.

## **Policy, Programs & Media Relations**

### **USGE's Public Safety Campaign**



In the Policy, Programs and Media Relations department, one of our biggest achievements has been our Public Safety Campaign. This campaign's objective is to increase the awareness of Canadians and decision-makers of the key work that our members do. It is aimed at establishing USGE as an expert and a 'go to' organization on the issues with which our members deal every day.

I am confident that as decision-makers become more knowledgeable of the role that USGE members play in public safety, that this information will help them make better decisions about workplace conditions and the importance of increased resources for our members' work. This, in turn, will significantly help USGE to meet our mandate to: "obtain and uphold ... for all members the best possible standards of wages, salaries and other conditions of employment and to protect their interests, rights, benefits and privileges".

To this end, between 2014-2017, USGE has created 3 videos, 4 Op-Eds, 1 major research project, and 1 award-winning communications campaign. In addition, we have hosted 2 high-level expert panels and have provided expert advice to 2 Parliamentary committees. Further, during this time, Regional Vice-Presidents, Local Executive Members and I have undertaken countless meetings with decision-makers across Canada introducing them to USGE and to the importance of our members' work.

### **USGE's first ever videos**

To start, in 2015, our mobilization committee, with staff support, and in partnership with well respected ad agency, Upperkut, created and released USGE's first ever videos. These light-hearted, animated, "explainer" videos entitled: ["We are the Union of Solicitor General"](#)

[Employees](#)” and [“USGE: At the heart of public safety”](#) have proven to be ideal tools to help USGE share information about the work that our members do coast to coast to coast.

### USGE’s award-winning campaign: Illuminating Safety

Building on this work, USGE then partnered with well-known advertising agency, TAXI 2 to create a sophisticated and effective communications product that would increase our members’ pride in our union, while increasing the awareness of Canadians’ and decision-makers to the key work of our members.



At a PSAC communicators’ training, USGE’s work with TAXI was held up as an excellent example of an effective and groundbreaking way for unions to reach their communication objectives.

Between July 2015 and the fall of 2016, David Neufeld, National Vice-President, USGE senior staff, and I met with regularly with TAXI to determine the right strategy and most effective communications tool.

While USGE’s members play a variety of different and crucial roles in the criminal justice system, USGE and TAXI 2 shared a joint commitment to present the value of the work that our members do in a way that did not elicit fear, but rather confidence and trust in public servants, and the public service.

### Our Illuminating Safety video

National Vice-President, David Neufeld, key staff from USGE’s Policy, Programs & Media Relations department, and I worked closely with TAXI on the creation of a one night, park installation – which invited the public to experience the safety of light as a metaphor for the ways in which USGE’s 15,000 members contribute to public safety. The purpose was to convey a visceral feeling of safety among viewers, and an appreciation for the often “behind the scenes” public safety work our members often do.

[USGE Illuminating Safety](#) / [SESG : Votre protection en lumière](#)

### USGE: Keeping Canadians Safe - Tagline and microsite creation

In tandem with the work above, a powerful, new, tagline was identified for USGE that expressed the commonalities in the work of all of our 15,000 members: USGE: Keeping Canadians Safe / SESG: Nous Vous Protégeons.

In addition, an externally-facing microsite was developed ([www.keepingcanadianssafe.ca](http://www.keepingcanadianssafe.ca) / [www.nousvousprotegeons.ca](http://www.nousvousprotegeons.ca)) so that more Canadians, in addition to our members, could experience a compelling, contemporary, and informative webpage.



### Parliament Hill Campaign Launch

Once the video was completed, USGE hosted a launch on Parliament Hill in the presence of our Regional Vice Presidents and a number of Members of Parliament. It was the first time USGE had hosted an event on Parliament Hill, something that is frequently undertaken by other labor unions and groups to build awareness among key decision makers. For many MPs who received USGE's invitation, it served as an invaluable tool to educate them about our union and its role in public safety.

In addition to increasing USGE's visibility among Members of Parliament and community leaders, one of the outcomes of this event was that USGE was invited to present to the Liberal Caucus on Mental Health.

Regional Vice Presidents with the support of senior staff from the Policy and Program Departments, did an outstanding job speaking about the difficult but essential work undertaken by USGE's members. They spoke of these members, many of whom struggle with mental health issues as a result of the working environment and direct or secondary trauma to which we are exposed.

### News release & USGE's market research

During this time, USGE also partnered with Pomp & Circumstance in the creation and distribution of a [press release](#) regarding our members work that was posted in 33 digital media outlets. In

creating our news release, USGE undertook our first ever national market research through inserting three questions into an omnibus IPSOS market research survey and incorporating the results as USGE's news hook for the release.

This press release received 8,000,000 impressions in, among others, the Vancouver Sun, the Windsor Star, the Province, the Leader-Post, the Ottawa Citizen, Penticton Business, the National Post, the Montreal Gazette, the Edmonton Journal, and the Calgary Herald.

### The response from USGE members - "So proud to be a member!" -

To date, our public safety campaign videos have reached over 50,000 individuals with USGE members posting such comments on Facebook and Youtube as: "Awesome" "Well done" "So proud to be a member" "That is my union!" "Working behind the scenes to keep Canadians safe" "Thank you."

### USGE wins its first Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM) award

On May 6, 2017, USGE was extremely proud to be awarded the Canadian Association of Labour Media (CALM)'s "Stroke of Genius" award for our public safety campaign. The Stroke of Genius award celebrates the most innovative, and novel



communications project produced by a Canadian labour organization in the preceeding year. This represents USGE's first ever such honour from CALM.

Other components of our Public Safety Campaign included:

### USGE meets with decision-makers

Throughout 2015 and 2016, the Programs and Policy department supported Regional Vice Presidents, Local Executive members and I in an active campaign to meet with key Members of Parliament and other decision-makers. This decision was taken because of the fact that our union is little known on Parliament Hill, or by Members of Parliament throughout the country.

These efforts are key to promoting a better understanding among Canadians and a key group of decision-makers about the role USGE plays as a credible and authoritative voice on issues of criminal justice that are relevant to our members.

I and/or Brother David Neufeld have personally been able to meet with a variety of elected members including: Minister Blaney (CPC), Wayne Easter (LIB), Françoise Boivin (NDP), Vern White (CON), Bill Blair (LIB), Randell Garrison (NDP), Rankin Murray (NDP) NDP critic Matthew Dubé as well as Federal Minister Goodale (Public Safety and Preparedness).

Other RVPs have been equally busy meeting other key MPs and decision-makers.

Through these meeting, we have been able to share some of USGE's membership's concerns about dramatic changes to their working environments. These meeting are also positioning USGE as a sophisticated organization who has important policy recommendations which would, if implemented, make a real difference to our members.

This is why I also supported having Regional Vice Presidents, where possible, attend all major federal party conventions in 2016.

### Other Relevant Meetings

In my capacity as USGE President, and with the support of the Programs and Policy department, I also met with a number of other representatives involved in the correctional system, including Howard Sapers, Canada's Correctional Investigator, Kim Pate, Executive Director of Elizabeth Fry Societies, Yasir Naqvi, Provincial Minister of Community Safety and Corrections, Jim Watson, Mayor of Ottawa and representatives from the Canadian Red Cross (Alberta).



Several members of USGE's National Executive have attended events in Ottawa, and around the country, featuring key decision makers from all parties. In all of these meetings, I am pleased to report that USGE has been extremely well-received.

### Federal Government MPs Tour Correctional Facilities with USGE Members

A number of Regional Vice-Presidents and Local Executive members took the initiative to offer MPs the opportunity to visit their workplaces. MPs found these visits to be extremely powerful.

One such MP, Ms. Pamela Damoff, a key member of the House of Commons' Public Safety Committee and USGE champion, found her tour to be so powerful that she requested that USGE organize a tour for other MPs who serve on the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security. This unprecedented tour organized by USGE took MPs into a Community Parole Office, a Community Correctional Facility and a Federal Correctional Institution. Participants included the Chair of the House of Commons Public Safety Committee, Robert Oilphant, the Parliamentary Secretary to Minister Goodale, and a number of others. Building on the success of these tours, USGE looks forward to organizing subsequent tours of RCMP and other departmental workplaces.

### Pre-Budget Federal Submission 2016

In January/February 2016, USGE created our first ever Pre-Budget Submission which we were able to discuss with the House of Commons Standing Committee on Finance Chair, Wayne Easter. This submission outlined the following five USGE recommendations:

- Restore the Community Corrections Liaison Officer Program
- Reinstate CONDOR in the province of Quebec
- Reduce the number of offenders that federal Parole Officers supervise in correctional facilities
- Increase the support available for the re-integration of federal offenders once they are released into the community
- Re-open the regional labs for the RCMP

Not only did this submission help MPs to better understand some of USGE's priorities, it also supported our RVPs and Local Executive members in focusing their interventions when meeting with MPs themselves.

### Op-Eds & Press releases

In addition, to our Illuminating Safety campaign, and meetings with decision-makers, I was also able to publish the following 4 Op Eds as part of our Public Safety Campaign during this period. It is difficult work to ensure that Op Eds are published, and it is as a result of the Policy, Programs and Media department, as well as some of USGE's public engagement activities, that these opportunities to share USGE's message became possible.

March 9, 2015: [The hope of parole serves a purpose](#)

October 24, 2015: [Why this union cares about Syrians](#)

July 12, 2016: [Re-opening Canada's Prison Farms is just the first step](#)

November 22, 2016: [Maintain the momentum on public safety officer health research](#)

### USGE hosts Hill Times & iPolitics Criminal Justice Panels

Further in March 2016 and January 2017, we hosted two Criminal Justice Panels, the first with the Hill Times and the second with iPolitics, two of Canada's leading parliamentary publications. Both panels were sold out events convened by USGE and each featured a number of impressive organizations that are relevant to the discussion, including the Mental Health Health Commission of Canada, the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, the Native Women's Association of Canada, and USGE. Correctional Investigator, Howard Sapers, was also involved in both panels.

I represented USGE on the Hill Times panel, while Brother Neufeld represented us on the iPolitics panel. Each publication subsequently published articles on the outcomes of the panels which



prominently featured USGE's perspectives. Our objective for these panels was for USGE, given its role representing the crucial insights of front line workers across several departments, to demonstrate its potential as a leader in providing new solutions and perspectives on criminal justice. In order for USGE to exert more influence, hosting conversations with other well regarded organizations such as those I mention above is key.

### USGE Serves as an Expert Witness at the House of Commons Committee on Public Safety

Many of the above activities have all led to a significant result of our Public Safety Campaign efforts which was an invitation for USGE to appear before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security on occupational stress injuries last May 2016.

Because USGE had developed a strong connection to MP Ms. Pamela Damoff, who serves as a lead member of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Public Safety, Ms. Damoff was aware of USGE's perspective and supported USGE's interest in serving as a witness for this study. Serving as an expert witness in front of a Parliamentary Committee is not automatic, and requires the support of MPs from at least two parties. It is by invitation only and up to the Parliamentary Committee to decide.

This is why we were so pleased to receive such a rare invitation to appear before a Parliamentary Committee. Brother David Neufeld and I were given five minutes each to present our perspectives. We were then questioned by the Committee of twelve MPs about the effect of the work many of the USGE's members play in



public safety, and asked for some of USGE's recommendations on how to improve the working environment to diminish the effects of Occupational stress injuries (OSIs). To listen to our presentation [here](#).

Some of the results of our interventions were that the committee recommended the broadening of the definition of those who they recognize experiencing OSIs from “first responders” to “first responders and other public safety workers”. This is important as it will increase the recognition and visibility of the, at times, dangerous work that our members do to keep Canadians safe. In addition, if Parliament accepts the committee's recommendation it will mean that members could be eligible for compensation if they live in provinces where provincial workers' compensation rules presume that OSIs are caused by the job.

Further, our USGE presentation was featured prominently, and quoted as below, in the report itself:

- *“While there's always a risk of physical safety, most of the trauma is a result of the cumulative effect of collecting all the bits and pieces of detailed accounts of trauma and violence.... By reading these accounts, the employees we represent become secondary witnesses to rape, abuse, violence and death. Parole officers, like many of the other jobs performed by USGE members who work at the RCMP and in other agencies, spend most of their days reading detailed accounts of horrific acts committed by people against their victims. These accounts are full of horrific, graphic content outlining the physical and mental harm done to people, including small children.”.*

- *“Witnesses such as David Neufeld ... explained that with the exception of correctional officers, there are ‘approximately 7,000 employees who work in Correctional Service Canada, both within and outside federal prisons. This includes thousands of parole officers, program officers, teachers, Aboriginal liaison officers, tradespeople, clerks, case managers, and many others’. He added that there are “several thousand other public servants including the federal sex offender registry analysts, who are exposed on a daily basis, to details of the worst kinds of sexual abuse; transcription clerks, whose job it is to read and transcribe statements and files regarding offenders and their crimes on a daily basis”*

The value of having USGE perspectives featured so prominently in a House of Commons report are many fold. We plan on highlighting this report and its findings in many future fora to ensure that our members struggles with OSIs are recognized.

### Documenting & sharing USGE’s expertise: creating powerful knowledge on Occupational Stress Injuries

Another key accomplishment of this department is USGE’s report on Operational Stress Injuries. The issue of psychological injuries, such as post-traumatic stress disorder, among military personnel and certain public safety workers has received increased attention over the past few years. Given that many of our members are also exposed to trauma by constantly interacting with inmates and offenders in environments where they are at risk of direct trauma, while others are continuously working with traumatic material, USGE launched a study in order to paint a picture of what the impact of this exposure is, and how employers address this issue.



To gather the information needed to tell this story, our researcher, along with our Policy, Programs, and Media team, designed a bilingual, anonymous, online survey that was distributed to 4,700 of our members across the country (everyone for whom we had an email address). We received over 1,200 responses during that time. Our researcher also conducted 18 one-on-one interviews with

members across this country, either in person or by phone. Findings show that the vast majority of survey respondents and interviewees spend more than half of their days working with traumatic material or within potentially traumatic situations. The study found that this regular

exposure to trauma causes many of our members to suffer from nightmares, insomnia, depression and relationship problems, among others things. In addition, the survey results, along with the stories that we have gathered from interviews, show that a majority of respondents received little or no training to deal with their constant exposure to traumatic material.

The research concluded that many of our members are at risk of, or are currently suffering from, operational stress injuries such as post-traumatic stress in work environments where the proper training to protect workers' mental health is minimal or does not exist at all. A series of recommendations are included in the report that urge policy makers to implement measures that will better protect USGE members from the risks of daily exposure to trauma.

The Operational Stress Injury Report urges federal government action to recognize the negative impacts of second-hand trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder and other stress injuries sustained by federal Public Safety employees:

- Amend the Government Employees Compensation Act to recognize operational stress injury for public servants regularly exposed to both direct and second-hand trauma – setting a precedent for provincial Workplace Compensation Boards to recognize and provide compensation for second-hand trauma impacts.
- Expand the federal Employee Assistance Program to give public safety employees experiencing second-hand trauma access to specialized trauma counsellors.
- Create custom-designed resiliency and emotional preparedness training for new and existing public safety officers likely to have regular exposure to traumatic material.
- Design and implement de-stigmatization programs and training for new and existing managers in public safety departments where workers are likely to have regular exposure to traumatic material.

## **Direct Member Engagement**

Some of the key work of our organization, of course, is to be communicating directly with our members. In addition to our Illuminating Safety Campaign, USGE has engaged in this communication in many ways.

### **Members' Mobilization**



### **Information pickets, bbqs & demonstrations**

During this time, our mobilization work has also been active. Local Executives across the country have hosted, and/or been involved, many information pickets, bbqs, demonstrations and more. Our USGE mobilization committee also played a key role in mobilizing members across the country. After their first initiative of creating "USGE: At the heart of public safety" bracelets for

distribution to members, the mobilization committee then tackled one of our first key issues of this time period: the 2015 federal election.

### **USGE gets out the vote: the 2015 federal election**

Knowing that so much was at stake for the union movement overall and our members particularly during the 2015 election, the mobilization committee spearheaded the idea to create videos featuring each member of the USGE executive encouraging our members to get out and vote. Our staff created a powerful script and one afternoon and evening our National Executive meeting became a video production site – with lights and backdrops, cameras and re-takes. Paired with original music and lyrics courtesy of one of our members, the results were the following two light-hearted, yet powerful, videos:

[Getting Out the Vote 1](#) // [Getting Out the Vote 2](#)

These videos were released to members both on our website and through a direct email message from me. The feedback we received was impressive. Many members wrote to say how happy they were to see USGE working as a team, and having fun, while delivering an important message.

### **Supporting our bargaining teams**

The committee also spearheaded the creation of four memes - two in relation to the election and two in support of our bargaining teams. The latter were released and re-released during bargaining periods.

### **15-15-15 Campaign**

The mobilization committee, with support from staff, also launched a 15-15-15 campaign designed to put pressure on the government to complete the collective bargaining process and to protect our members' sick leave.

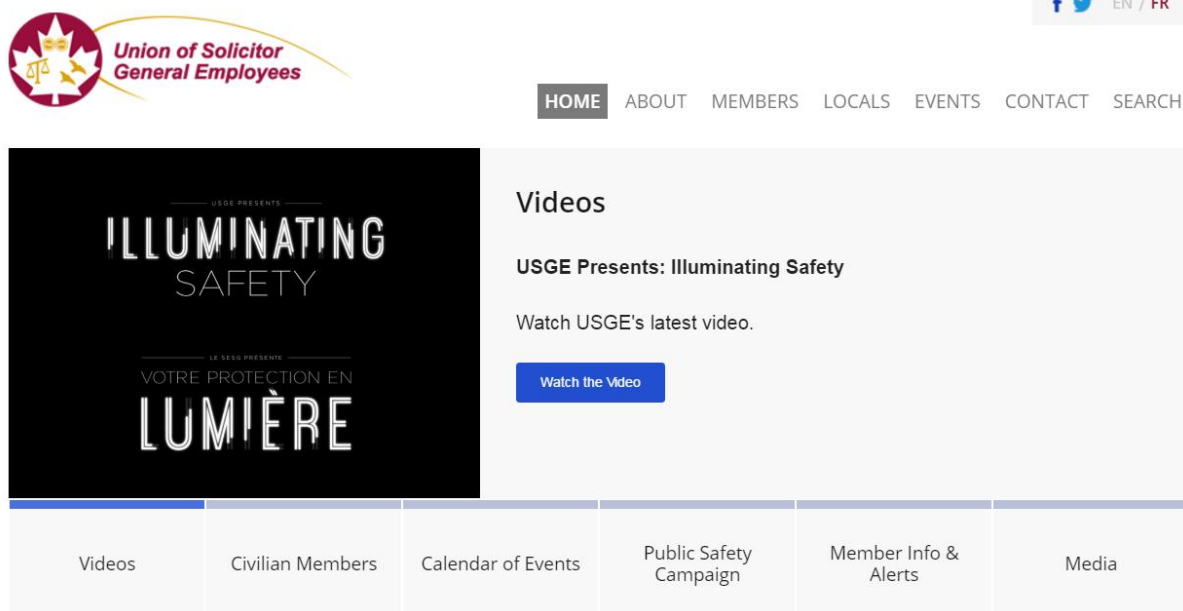
### **Mobilization community visits/tours**

The mobilization committee also arranged a number of very successful community visits across the country.

### **Sharing our work with our members – direct emails, our website, and social media**

During the past three years, I have sent a number of direct messages to members, Local Executive members, and RVPs in regards to a huge variety of issues. Some of these issues included our PSLREB wins, information on how individuals could vote in the federal election, our “Get out the Vote” videos, the change in government, our Illuminating Safety campaign, as well as end of year wrap ups and holiday messages. I was pleased with how many members responded directly to me, thanking us for keeping them in the loop.

In regards to our website, due to significant work on the part of our USGE Communications Committee and on the part of USGE staff, our website was entirely redesigned during this period. With the addition of sliding banners, a calendar, a new social media feed, updated photos, an updated Toolbox, and a Civilian Members page, our website is a better and better reflection of USGE.



In addition, our social media activity has increased significantly over this period. In January, 2015, we had less than 100 followers of our Facebook page, and by May 2017 we had quadrupled that number. Of course, we still have a long way to go, however, the work that we have accomplished during this period lays a strong foundation for future growth. One of our most popular Facebook posts featured our PSLREB FOS win. It reached almost 30,000 people and resulted in 3,500 hits to our website. Another extremely popular post was our release of our Illuminating Safety video – which to date has reached over 50,000 individuals. Apart from these, our most popular posts tend to be posts that include candid pictures of our members and elected officials.

### USGE's 2015 National Local Presidents' Meeting & our 2016 Regional Conferences

Of course, we cannot complete this section of the report without acknowledging our USGE 2015 Local Presidents' Meeting (LPM) and our USGE 2016 Regional Conferences. It is always a pleasure to work directly with some of our most active volunteers in both these fora.

#### **USGE's 2015 National Local Presidents' Meeting**

Our priority for our Local Presidents' Meeting was to develop and offer relevant and politically sophisticated training for USGE leaders prior to the 2015 federal election. In addition to hearing from two senior political consultants, Kathleen Monk, former Communications Director to the late Jack Layton, and Lynne Hamilton, senior staff under the Ontario Harris government, USGE organized for representatives of the three major parties to address the delegates. Liberal MP

Wayne Easter (and former Solicitor General) NDP MP and Justice Critic Francoise Boivin, as well as Conservative Senator, Vern White addressed participants and answered questions from the floor. Finally, USGE heard from a leading senior economist for the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and CBC media commentator, Armine Yalnizyan. In their evaluations, participants mentioned their appreciation for the high level training that they received.

### **2016 USGE Regional Conventions**

Participants at our 2016 USGE Regional Conferences indicated overwhelmingly that they appreciated the content and experience that these conferences provided. They enjoyed the first day, organized by USGE, which addressed different aspects of our USGE work, as well as resolution writing and emerging workplace issues, as much as they benefitted from the second day's agenda, on a variety of topics, organized by RVPs.



Many delegates mentioned that they appreciated the contact they were able to have with all levels of USGE leadership at these conferences, as well as the learning and networking that these conferences provided.

### **Policy, Programs & Media Relations Conclusion**

All in all, we are proud our Policy, Programs and Media Relations work has been recognized as ground-breaking and innovative by both PSAC and by the Canadian Association of Labour Media. We know that our Public Safety campaign has begun to reap rewards as we are more and more recognized among Members of Parliament and thought leaders on criminal justice issues. I believe strongly that these increased connections between USGE, decision-makers, and Canadians overall, will produce better insight and appreciation for the work that USGE members undertake and lead to better decisions regarding resource allocation and working conditions for our members.

## **Finance & Administration**

### **Becoming a more accountable & transparent organization**

When I became National President, it was clear to me that USGE required an in-depth analysis of our financial management, procedures and best ways to create an accountable and transparent organization. Soon into my mandate, the financial management consulting firm OTUS was hired to provide such an analysis. Based on their recommendations, we undertook a selection process to hire a Director of Finance and Administration who would bring the expertise of a Certified Professional Accountant to USGE. Thanks to the hard work of the Personnel Committee, we were able to hire Sister Christina Hatchard in August 2015.

### **Audits, quarterly statements & USGE policies**

Though she was hired in mid-2015, Ms Hatchard oversaw the finalization of our audited statements for 2014 as well as overseeing each subsequent audit. Further, since her hiring and due to the hard work of the Finance and Administration department, we are now able to provide quarterly statements to the NEM, as promised.

### **Offering Treasurer training webinars**

Furthermore, in 2017, we were able to offer our first Local Treasurer training webinars. To date, the feedback we received on these webinars has been strong. Participants indicate that they feel better able to successfully and effectively manage and account for the monies of their Locals due to their participation in these webinars.

### **Coordinating our 2017 Triennial Convention**

In addition to all their responsibilities, our Finance and Administration team have taken on the coordination of our 2017 Triennial Convention in close collaboration with our Host Committee. We are very much looking forward to benefitting from their hard work in July.

### **Managing human resources**

In regards to human resources, early in my mandate, it became clear that eliminating the receptionist duties and transferring those resources over to Labour Relations might prove beneficial to the organization. To this end, all staff were assigned individual phone numbers and an access phone was installed outside of the door of the main office, which also served to increase office security.

Soon afterwards, the Department of Policy, Programs and Media was created within USGE so as to increase the awareness of Canadians and of decision-makers to the key work that our members undertake. I remain convinced that as decision-makers become better informed of our members' key contributions to public safety, the more likely they will be to allocate the

appropriate resources so that our members may safely and effectively accomplish their work. For further information on the significant accomplishments of this department, please see [here](#).

Lastly, in regards to staff, we now undertake quarterly full staff meetings to ensure that staff feel connected and informed of major organizational priorities. As mentioned earlier, we have undertaken two successful staff retreats during my mandate as well.



### **Providing excellent advice**

Overall, the department of Finance and Administration has provided me with significant insight into USGE's finances, ways to streamline costs, and measures that we must take to make our organization more accountable and transparent over these past few years. During our Regional Conferences in 2016, many delegates noted how pleased they were with the increased transparency of USGE's financial situation. While some members indicated that they didn't agree with all financial decisions that USGE made in the past, they were very pleased to have the opportunity to understand, and discuss, them. In my opinion this is the mark of a transparent, accountable and democratic organization.

If you would like additional information on USGE Finances, please refer to Sister Hatchard's Financial Report.

### **Transitions**

I cannot complete this report without noting some of the key transitions which took place during these past three years.

In 2015, Brother Byron Duguay chose to retire from USGE. Byron is a well known and well liked and well respected, activist. Thank you so much for your dedication and very hard work, Byron.

In 2016, Brother Fred Sadori decided to retire. In his time as Interim Director of Labour Relations, he provided strong leadership to addressing the significant back log of grievances, was instrumental in designing our first Performance Assessment Tool, and was a valued boss and colleague to many. We wish you well, Fred!



And in 2017, we will be acknowledging the tremendous contributions of Regional Vice-Presidents, Danielle Belleau, Jan Hauck, and Debbie Stangrecki. The contributions of these RVPs cannot be underestimated. Each of these Vice-Presidents have shown tremendous dedication to their members, the Local Executives, and our organization. They will be very missed.

The transition though that was likely most felt by all of us during this period was the death of Brother Claude Duchesneau. Brother Claude played a tremendous role with USGE, and was granted honorary USGE membership in September 2016. As an RVP, and later a staff member, Claude worked tirelessly for USGE. He is very missed by many.

## **Conclusion**

I am extremely proud of the work that has been accomplished by USGE over these past three years. When I was elected to serve our membership, I promised I would:

- Increase the democracy, accountability and transparency of USGE,
- Increase the mobilization and engagement of our members, and
- Modernize the organization.

I believe the above report demonstrates that through the terrifically hard work of our Local Executive Members, our Regional Vice-Presidents and our staff, that we have done exactly that. Of course, the work is not yet complete, however, I believe we have made great strides in these areas. I am extremely proud of the dedicated, talented and caring group of individuals who make up USGE and of the work that we have accomplished together over the past three years. My sincerest thanks go to everyone who has contributed so meaningfully so that USGE can effectively serve its members.

