



**CEPACC**

## **Common Interest Forum**

When CEPACC and Bell Aliant renewed the collective agreement last summer, the memorandum of agreement included the following provision, which you will find in Appendix Z, paragraph 5 of the contract:

*The parties recognize the need to develop more effective and efficient means of resolving differences and of making necessary amendments to the collective agreement during its term. To that end, the Company and the Council commit to the development and, where agreed, the implementation of alternative bargaining and dispute resolution systems early in the term of this agreement. As soon as possible the parties will ask the Federal Conciliation and Mediation Service to assist in this development. It is understood that senior executives of the Company and officers of the Council will actively participate in any training for, or implementation of such alternative systems. The Company will pay reasonable associated travel, accommodation, and lost wage costs for employees who are Council participants.*

In early February twenty five managers and twenty five union members attended a two day training session with Barney Dobbin and Sheri King, officers from the Mediation and Conciliation Service.

On February 27 and 28<sup>th</sup>, representatives of Bell Aliant and CEPACC met to start working on establishing the new process and to start reviewing issues. With the assistance of Barney and Sheri, the parties established ground rules for future meetings and co-wrote the following opening statement:

*In the 2007 Collective Agreement, the Parties recognized the need to develop more effective and efficient means of resolving differences and making necessary amendments to the collective agreement during its term. To that end, we agree to establish the Common Interest Forum ("CIF").*

*We have the following common goals: to improve communications and trust in order to establish a relationship we can be proud of. We want a relationship that will benefit both the employees and the business by enabling us to develop better*

*solutions to our problems than either of us could on our own. We believe a collaborative relationship gives us a competitive advantage.*

*We share the following values: the importance of workers, customers and a sound labour management relationship for the success of the business.*

*We will strive to achieve our goals by developing an adaptable, non-adversarial process to enable proactive resolution of issues and amendments to the collective agreement. We recognize that this involves some risk-taking but we believe that this will be the best way to find collaborative and effective solutions.*

*We recognize that change will be gradual and will only happen with the concerted effort of the senior leaders of both organizations. To this end, we hereby commit the time, resources, effort and leadership required to achieve our goals for the benefit of everybody at Bell Aliant.*

An agenda of issues for future discussions has been developed, and meetings have been scheduled monthly for the balance of 2008. **It has been agreed that all future Common Interest Forum meetings will be attended by at least four senior executives from the Company and four officers of the Council.** All CIF meetings will be facilitated by a FMCS officer.

More training sessions for additional managers and union members are being scheduled starting April 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup>.

Monthly joint sessions for agenda issues have been scheduled through the remainder of 2008.

In solidarity,

Penny Fawcett, Chairperson CEPACC

Noel Pauley

Mary Croke, Recording Secretary

Phil Briffett, Vice Chairperson CEPACC

Chuck Rouse

Joyclin Coates, Treasurer