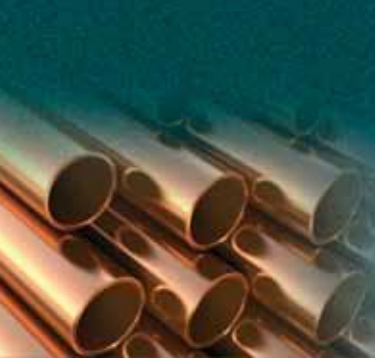




PIPED-IN

UA Local 324 Newsletter



November/December 2024



Jim Noon

Jim Noon

Business Manager
Financial Secretary

Stefan Plusa

President
Union Representative

Gord Wickett

Vice President

Kevin Pivarnyk

Union Organizer

Darren Vaux

Training Director

Haylee Downey

Office Manager

Ryan Teeney

Apprenticeship Training



Business Managers Report

As we near the end of 2024, it's a great time to reflect on the remarkable growth and achievements of our local union and the vibrant construction sector here on Vancouver Island. This year, we've seen continued progress, bolstered by our growing membership and strong commitment to developing the next generation of skilled tradespeople through our apprenticeship program. Since 2017, our union membership has grown by an impressive 50%. This milestone is a direct result of the dedication and hard work of all our members. The bulk of this growth can be attributed to our robust apprenticeship program, which has been essential in ensuring we have a sustainable workforce for the future. The apprenticeship program is the cornerstone of our succession planning, helping to shape the next generation of journeypersons.

At a recent UA Business Managers meeting in September, we received valuable insights into our current membership structure. The UA has set the benchmark for the ratio of journeypersons to apprentices at 4:1, with a minimum required active member-to-retiree ratio of 4:1. I'm pleased to report that our local union has far surpassed these benchmarks.

- Active Journeypersons to Apprentices Ratio: We are currently running at 4:2, the required ratio is 4:1.
- Active Members to Retirees Ratio: We are currently at 7:1 and the required ratio is 4:1

- Average Member Age: Our average age is 38.2 years, which is below the BC average of 39.6 years. This is a positive indicator of a younger, more dynamic workforce.

These figures reflect our strong position as we continue to develop a skilled, sustainable workforce for the future.

A Moderate Work Outlook for 2025

Looking ahead, we are optimistic about the work picture for 2025. The demand for construction work on Vancouver Island continues to grow, particularly in multi-story housing and institutional sectors. However, changing economic conditions will likely be critical in shaping the construction industry in 2025. Lower interest rates and falling inflation may reduce project financing costs. This ease in financing will likely encourage both public and private sector investments in construction.



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Some of the upcoming projects on the horizon include:

- Harris Green: A 1600-unit condo development
- Westshore RCMP Detachment
- Long-Term Senior Complexes: In Victoria, Nanaimo, and Campbell River
- Nanaimo Cancer Center

These projects will provide ample work opportunities for our membership throughout the island.



Members working at Cowichan hospital.

Advocacy for Skilled Trades Certifications & Flush Toilets

In September 2024, we celebrated a significant victory with the BC government's announcement that plumbing and sprinkler fitting will become certified trades within the province. This new certification will ensure that only qualified and certified tradespeople, including apprentices, are performing work in our trades, upholding high standards of safety and quality across the industry. This now completes the list of all piping trades which will soon be compulsory in our province. Final legislation and implementation of the plumbing and sprinkler trades will be announced in the near future.

Additionally, on October 1, 2024, the province implemented a new regulation requiring

toilets on all job sites. While this is a positive development, we've received multiple complaints from members that general contractors are still not providing flush toilets on some projects. Rest assured, we will be monitoring all projects within our jurisdiction to ensure compliance with this new legislation.

Collective Bargaining - 2025

As we look toward 2025, our standard collective agreement for commercial, institutional, residential, and service work will expire on April 30, 2025. We have emailed out a survey to all members to gather feedback for our negotiating committee, which we will use to craft our proposals for the bargaining process.

We encourage all members to participate in this survey, as your feedback is critical in shaping our collective bargaining strategy. Negotiations with our signatory contractors are set to begin in early 2025, and it's essential that we go into these discussions with a clear mandate from our membership.

In summary, 2024 has been a year of significant progress for our local union and the construction sector on Vancouver Island. We've seen impressive membership growth, strong apprenticeship numbers, and a promising outlook for 2025. With the continued support of our members and contractors, we are well positioned for continued success in the years ahead.

Thank you all for your hard work, dedication, and commitment to the union. Let's continue to build a strong and sustainable future for our industry and our communities.

UA 324 New Headquarters and Training Facility

The Plumbers and Pipefitters Building Society directors are committed to ensuring our new facility is built with the right focus on quality, durability, and functionality to meet the needs of the union's growing membership for years to come. Our new facility represents an investment in the future of the union and its members. It will provide the resources necessary to continue delivering the best training programs and administrative support, ensuring UA 324 stays at the forefront of the industry.



UA 324 Headquarters Groundbreaking Ceremony



Project Overview:

- Current Phase:
The project is underway with the foundation and underground services being completed by the end of 2024. This is a crucial phase that will lay the groundwork for the entire structure.
- Timeline:
 - o Early 2025: Major construction activities will begin.
 - o Summer 2025: The new union hall and training facility are scheduled to open, marking a major milestone for our local union.

Wishing you and your family a festive and joyful holiday season! Looking forward to continued success in 2025.

Fraternally Yours,
Jim Noon
Business Manager/Financial Secretary

Organizing and Recruitment

Autumn has arrived, but our workload remains consistent. We are pleased to report that our operations are in full swing! Several large-scale projects are now underway in the South Island. We experienced a bit of a slow down in the summer, which was an unusual occurrence. However, this was not due to any fault of our own. The carpentry and concrete industries faced challenges in providing an adequate workforce, resulting in delays for certain projects. Some of our members were understandably surprised, as they had never previously experienced unemployment. This served as a reminder of the nature of the construction industry.

We are on track to reach the milestone of 1,300 members in the upcoming year, potentially even sooner. With the influx of incoming work, this growth seems inevitable. Our projects include concrete towers, multi-story wood frame condos, schools, laboratories, hospitals, and more. It is an incredibly exciting time for our union!

I want to extend my gratitude to our members for their efforts in spreading awareness about our industry to non-union workers. Your dedication in educating them about our trades is greatly appreciated. While we continue to offer \$100 referral cards, the overwhelming interest we have received allows us to be selective in choosing candidates.

I am happy to report that work in the central island region is finally gaining momentum! It commenced with the Cowichan Hospital project and has now expanded to Nanaimo. Several significant projects are in the pipeline for Nanaimo, including a cancer clinic, Lantzville care home, multiple wood frames, and VIU Student Residences. Additionally, we are actively targeting various mid-island sites with the intention of expanding our presence and undertaking more work in the central island area.



Our on-going social media campaign in collaboration with Treehouse Media continues to yield positive results. Individuals are relocating to Vancouver Island from the lower mainland and other parts of Canada. These individuals are drawn to the pace, lifestyle, climate, and of course, the availability of work that our region has to offer.

Recently, we conducted our inaugural Bootcamp for Sprinkler Fitting. The selected candidates participated in a comprehensive 12-hour program over four evenings, gaining valuable insights into the fundamentals of working on a construction site.

In the spirit of giving back to our community, we have forged partnerships with several local businesses this year. Recognizing

that our workforce is predominantly local, we are committed to supporting local enterprises. In addition to our existing partnerships with Lordco and Marks, we have established agreements with Westshore Spring and 4x4, Island Outfitters, and Cap it trucks accessories. Negotiations for additional partnerships are underway. Through these collaborations, our members are entitled to a minimum discount of 10% when shopping at these local businesses.

We encourage everyone to prioritize safety and maintain the exceptional work ethic that characterizes our union.

*Fraternally,
Kevin Pivarnyk
Union Representative / Organizer*



Training Report

Camosun College Pipe Trades continues to experience high demand for apprenticeship training. The Steamfitter/Pipefitter and Sprinkler Fitter apprenticeship classes are predominantly composed of UA 324 members. Plumbing classes this year have had approximately 75% union members, while Refrigeration & AC Mechanic classes maintain a significant presence with roughly 25% of our apprenticeship classes being UA members. Foundations (pre-employment) classes are strong, and our Local has successfully recruited some of the most exceptional new apprentices in the industry through our collaboration with the Camosun Pipe Trades department and our members who serve as instructors.



It was an honour, for Brother Alasdair Reid and me to attend this event at Local 56. We were very impressed by the dedication and professionalism demonstrated by both members during the competition. Their achievements reflect the high standards of training and expertise upheld by the UA community.

The recent success of the BC Workplace Innovation Program (W.I.P.) has brought significant advantages to our Joint Training Committee and its members. This funding allows us to invest in advanced training and skills development, ensuring our members stay competitive in an ever-changing job market. It also enables collaborative initiatives that promote sustainability within our industry, such as introducing First Nations communities and high school students to the trades, as well as offering additional support to new apprentices. Brother James Smyth, WIP Lead Instructor, has already trained over 500 students through this program. This achievement further solidifies our position as leaders in workforce development and innovation.

The 2024 UA National Apprentice Competition, hosted by UA Local 56 in Halifax from June 10 to 14, showcased exceptional talent and skill. Representing



Keiran Young - Apprentice Sprinklerfitter

the UA Western Region, Apprentice Brothers Keiran Young (Sprinklerfitter) and Jeremy Morton (Steamfitter/Pipefitter) earned their spots through stellar performances at the UA Western Competition held at UA Local 488 in Edmonton.

Congratulations to Brothers Andy Wilson and Derek Meadows on their successful graduation from the UA International Instructor Training Program! Completing 40 hours of intensive training is a significant achievement, and it reflects their dedication and hard work. Six members will be returning to the UA Instructor Training Program in 2025, showcasing a continued commitment to professional growth and excellence. Well done to all involved!

I am pleased to recognize Brother Alasdair Reid for recently being appointed to the position of Assistant Training Director by our Business Manager. This is a



Jeremy Morton - Steamfitter/Pipefitter



Mike Gordon at the UA Nationals

well-deserved recognition of his skills and dedication. Alasdair's role in facilitating member training and managing the Workplace Innovation Program will undoubtedly contribute to enhancing opportunities for both journeypersons and apprentices. It's inspiring to see such a strong commitment to member development and continuous improvement. Best wishes to Alasdair in this new role!



Dave Young

There are numerous new training opportunities available for spring 2025.

Members are encouraged to visit the Training section of our website to explore the options and sign up once logged in.

Unless otherwise specified, all courses will be held at Camosun Pipe Trades in Victoria.

Feel free to reach out to me directly if you have any comments, questions, or suggestions regarding the training programs.

JTC Courses completed for members in 2024:

- o NAUSC Supervisor 1
- o Digital Multimeter Workshop
- o Flue Gas Analyzer Workshop Rinnai™ Tankless Water Heater Workshop



- o Introduction to Rigging Principles
- o Introduction to Total Robotic Stations
- o 2020 Plumbing Code Update
- o Introduction to Revit/Pipe Modeling
- o NAUSC/CSA Medical Gas Installer
- o Backflow Tester's Recertification Course
- o TSBC Field Safety Representative Training for HVACR

Upcoming Training Opportunities in 2025 from your Joint Training Committee:

- o Introduction to Rigging Principles
- o Introduction to Robotic Total Stations & Revit
- o Advance Brazing Techniques
- o Gasfitter Servicing Workshop
- o Pipe Fabrication - Layout & Bending
- o Rinnai™ Tankless Water Heater Workshop
- o Cross Connection Control - Backflow Assembly Tester: Refresher Training & Exam Session
- o Plumber Red Seal Preparation
- o Steamfitter/Pipefitter Red Seal Preparation. Wednesdays and Saturdays. (This class will be taught both online and in-person.)
- o NAUSC (National Association of Union Schools and Colleges) Medical Gas Piping and Systems Installation Personnel Certification Program.
- o Cross Connection Control - Backflow Assembly Tester: Refresher Training
- o Advanced to Blueprint Reading

On behalf of the Vancouver Island Piping Industry Joint Training Committee, I would like to wish you and your families a very happy holiday season.

Darren Vaux
 Training Director
 UA Local 324
darren@ualocal324.com



Pension Plan Benefit Increases

The Victoria Mechanical Industry Pension Plan (the “VMIPP”) has recently completed a plan valuation to the end of December 31, 2023. The pension plan has seen substantial growth through steady labour hours and solid investment returns. The value of the plan’s assets increased by \$13.8 million in 2023. After fees, investments from the plan earned a return of 11.4% in 2023. As a result, net assets increased to \$113 million in 2023.



The Trustees are pleased to announce the following three increases effective January 1, 2025.

1. INCREASE TO ACTIVE MEMBERS & FORMER MEMBERS (NON-RETIRED)

Effective January 1, 2025 all active members or former members with a monthly pension benefit not withdrawn or transferred out of the plan as of that date, will receive a 10% increase to the pension benefit accrued to December 31, 2024.

2. INCREASE TO RETIRED MEMBERS, SPOUSES & BENEFICIARIES

Effective January 1, 2025 all members, spouses and beneficiaries receiving a monthly pension benefit from the plan will receive a 10% increase to their pension benefit.

3. INCREASE TO ACTIVE MEMBERS (NON RETIRED)

Effective January 1, 2025 all active members will receive an 18% increase to the benefit accrual rate. The accrual rate will increase from \$0.055 per hour to \$0.065 per hour.

Health & Welfare

- Reminder - Please ensure your pension beneficiary and life insurance beneficiaries are up to date and current. If you are uncertain who you have named, please contact the union hall for verification.
- Please note: the deadline for submission of 2024 extended health benefits is June 30, 2025
- UA 324 is offering \$300.00 gym membership reimbursements for eligible fitness expenses. Please contact the union hall for a fitness claim form.



By-law Submissions - The following by-laws were submitted during our November General Union Meeting. The following by-laws will be read out during the December General Meeting and debated and voted on at the January 2025 General Union Meeting.

Amend (red)- Article1 CL.3 General meetings shall be held on the second Tuesday of the month commencing at 5:00pm excluding July and August. It will be at the discretion of the Business Manager to arrange area meetings as required.

Delete (red) -Article 2 CL.7 - (a) When a member is dispatched, they will retain their position on the unemployment register until they complete ten (10) working days. It is the member’s responsibility to notify the union office if they become unemployed before completing ten (10) working days. **Any member working away on travel card will maintain their position on the unemployed register.**

Amend (red)- Article 8 CL.7 All members must inform the local union office within (7) days of change of mailing address, emailing address, and phone number.

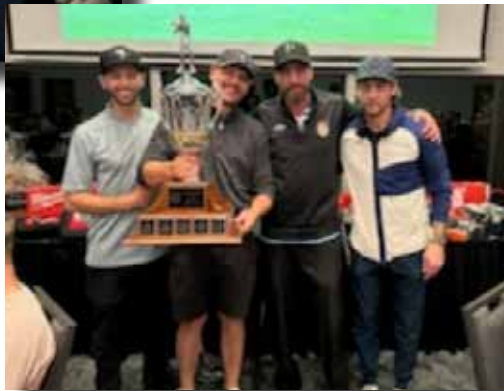
New clause- Article 10 CL. 11 If a member falls one month in arrears on their counter dues, and they are enrolled in a pre-authorized debit (PAD) agreement for payment, the union shall process an automatic double payment for the following month. The double payment shall be processed on the first Friday of the following month as part of the ongoing pre-authorized debit agreement. This payment will cover the arrears and the current month’s dues. The member will be notified in advance of any double payment that is required due to arrears.

Entertainment/Events

We held our Annual Charity Golf Tournament on September 21, 2024 at Olympic View Golf Course. Thank you to all our volunteers for making this day a success! This year we had 2 winning foursomes!



*Winning Foursome
Matt Lawson, Steve Hiscox,
Tomba Huddleston
& Tim Johnson*



*Winning foursome
Nick Watling, Dan Fratzczak,
Jason Stewart & Kyle Richter*



Retiree Luncheon

**Friday, December 13th, 2024
11:30am-2:00pm**

**Legion Branch
292, 411 Gorge Road**

**Please call (250) 382-0415
to sign up.**

*This is a great
opportunity to
reconnect
with fellow retired
members.*



Annual Children's Christmas Party

**Saturday December 7th 10am-1pm
Olympic View Golf Course
643 Latoria Road**

We will be hosting a

"Breakfast with Santa"

The event will start at 10:00 am with a buffet breakfast followed by presents for all registered children 10 and under. In addition, we will have gingerbread making, coloring and entertainment.

This is a great event for our members and families.

Registration is now closed as this event is now at capacity!



Bob McPherson 1943-2024

One of Bob's lasting legacies was his role in developing training programs, including the original medical gas course. This course was developed to ensure proper installation and practice was in place to safeguard the patients who desperately required this life saving equipment. His dedication to education ensured that countless members were equipped with the skills they needed to succeed. Bob believed that knowledge was power, and he shared that power generously.

In memory of Bob, we have dedicated a new award in his honour. The Bob McPherson Award of Excellence which will be handed out during our annual long term service and apprentice award banquet. This award will be presented to a member who has shown the willingness to complete additional UA training and upgrading programs. The first award will be presented in 2025."



*Bob McPherson
1943-2024
58 Year UA Member*

In Memory of:

Robert (Bob) McPherson	September 5, 2024	58 Year Member
Ken Bennett	September 23, 2024	24 Year Member
Mark Brennan	November 2, 2024	17 Year Member
Brian Thompson	November 8, 2024	50 Year Member
Al MacNaughton	November 29, 2024	68 Year Member



*Happy Holidays to all our
Members and their Families*

Union Holidays 2024/2025		
Christmas Day	Wednesday	December 25, 2024
Boxing Day	Thursday	December 26, 2024
New Year's Day	Wednesday	January 1, 2025
Family Day	Monday	February 17, 2025
Good Friday	Friday	April 18, 2025
Easter Monday	Monday	April 21, 2025
Victoria Day	Monday	May 19, 2025
Canada Day	Tuesday	July 1, 2025
Friday preceding BC Day	Friday	August 1, 2025
BC Day	Monday	August 4, 2025

Christmas Office Hours	
Tuesday, December 24, 2024	- Closed at 12:00pm
Wednesday December 25, 2024	- CLOSED
Thursday, December 26, 2024	- CLOSED
Friday, December 27, 2024	- CLOSED
Monday, December 30, 2024	- Open 8:30am to 4:30pm
Tuesday, December 31, 2024	- CLOSED at 12:00pm
Wednesday, January 1, 2025	- CLOSED
Thursday, January 2, 2025	- Open 8:30am to 4:30pm
Friday, January 3, 2025	- Open 8:30am to 4:30pm