



Saskatchewan Joint Board  
Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union  
Affiliated with ILWU Canada

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### **Wynyard Co-op Strike Update**

A tentative deal was reached in conciliation on Dec 23<sup>rd</sup> and was subsequently ratified on Dec 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013. The dispute is over. Unfortunately the deal did not give the members the wages that they were seeking. The members had been on a picket line for 117 days.

Despite the strike and loss of business, publically shaming the Co-op and an emergency meeting petitioned by the Co-op membership (public) with an overwhelming vote for the Board to offer the Union the wages being requested, the Co-op refused to budge on the wages in any way. Having no leverage left, the members ratified the deal. The victory in this dispute is that the community in Wynyard now fully understands who is running their “member – owned” Co-operative and it is not the Board that was elected.

In 2001, staff with RWDSU went to all of our rural unionized Co-ops and re-signed the membership. The cards were then submitted to the Labour Relations Board to amend the certification for one provincial certification. Federated Co-op argued that they were not the employer but simply hired for their “services”. The LRB agreed with that and the provincial common certification was denied. Since then, we have seen that all Co-ops’ payroll, benefit administration, training courses, General Manager placements (including employment contracts), labour relations and contract negotiations go through Federated Co-op in Saskatoon. “Member owned” indeed. The strike may be over but I think the Wynyard Co-op’s Board of Directors will still have questions from the Co-op members to answer for at the next Board election.

On behalf of all of the striking workers in Wynyard, I want to sincerely thank all of you that have supported us with financial aid, donations of food and for taking the time to come and walk the line with us over the last 16+ weeks. The members have been truly touched by the show of solidarity from across the province.

In solidarity,

Trevor Miller  
Representative  
RWDSU