

The ESSEX FREE PRESS BUSINESS

Small Business 101

A new law that could really hurt your business

Bill C-257 is proposed legislation to ban replacement workers during a strike or lockout among federally regulated firms. If this law were passed, an employer could be fined \$1,000 a day for employing "replacement workers", including employees who disagree with their own union and choose to work.

Firms under federal jurisdiction include transportation companies, communication companies, airlines, airports, air traffic controllers, ports, banks and

Canada Post. In the event of a strike or lockout, Bill C-257 would essentially make it illegal for these firms to continue operating. Think, how would that affect your business?

Many small firms will not be able to survive if a major national transportation or communications company is shut down over a long period of time. For example: the 1999 Canada Post strike cost the average small business and estimated \$240 each day in higher delivery costs, lost sales,

and delayed payments. The losses translated to more than \$200 million a day for small-and medium-size businesses across Canada. The Canadian Union of Postal Workers' (CUPW) contract is up for negotiation at the end of January 2007, presenting an opportunity for a strike early in 2007.

In July 2005 the container-trucking dispute affecting the Port of Vancouver cost firms in BC an estimated \$75 million a day in transportation costs alone.

It threatened the livelihood of many independent businesses, as their goods were held up at the port.

British Columbia and Quebec already have similar legislation, but it is important to remember that their laws are much more comprehensive than Bill C-257, which is only three pages long. Quebec is the only province where unionized employees are not allowed to cross the picket line. In BC, unionized employees are allowed to work during a strike, if they

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choose to cross the picket line. Last year, during the Telus strike, over 6,000 unionized employees chose to cross the picket line to go to work. With Bill C-257, this could not happen.

Academic and government studies have repeatedly found that a ban on replacement workers does more harm than good. In jurisdictions with the ban it has been proven that strikes are more frequent and last longer, there is less business investment and the unem-

ployment rate is higher.

So far, Bill C-257 has been supported by members of all political parties. If you have questions or concerns about this proposed legislation, please contact your Member of Parliament.

Small Business 101 is an information service provided by the Canadian Federation of Independent Business. It is not intended to replace legal and/or accounting advice.

Gore Mutual Insurance voted no. 1

TORONTO/CNW – The Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario (IBAO) has ranked Gore Mutual Insurance Company number one in their 2006 Rate Your Companies Survey released January 10, 2007.

In a letter to insurance brokers, Gord Stevenson, chair of the Broker Management Committee for the IBAO, stressed the importance of this survey and congratulated Gore Mutual on achieving the number one position.

The Insurance Brokers Association of Ontario's 10,000+ members are independent insurance brokers across Ontario who believe that cooperation enhances their ability to provide excellent service to their clients. This non-profit association is recognized by government, consumers, and the insurance industry as being the authoritative voice of Ontario's independent brokers.

"We are very proud to be given this honour," says Kevin McNeil, president and CEO of Gore Mutual. "Our employees work very

hard to provide brokers and their customers with genuine personal service. This shows us that we are on the right track."

Established in 1839, Gore Mutual is Canada's oldest property and casualty insurance company and works exclusively with independent insurance brokers. With offices in both Cambridge, Ont., and Vancouver, B.C., Gore Mutual was also named number one by the British Columbia Brokers Association in its last survey (2005).

Pandemic planning for businesses

Have you thought about pandemic planning and how a pandemic could affect your business?

Leamington Deputy Fire Chief Chuck Parsons will

be on hand at 8 a.m., Tuesday, Feb. 6 at Sherman's Station in Leamington to talk about pandemic planning and to answer questions.

This event is sponsored by the Leamington District Chamber of Commerce. Space is limited, so call soon to reserve your spot – 519-326-2721.

Summer jobs program announced

London/CNW – The McGuinty government's Ontario Summer Jobs program will help more than 70,000 young people find jobs or start their own business this summer, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities Chris Bentley announced Jan. 22.

"Our government is helping young Ontarians gain hands-on summer work experience while encouraging employers to hire students," said Bentley, speaking at Youth Opportunities Unlimited in London. "Creating opportunities for our young people to acquire valuable new skills contributes to their success and Ontario's future prosperity."

The government is investing more than \$52 million in the Ontario Summer Jobs strategy this year to help young people

ages 15 to 24, or up to 29 for persons with disabilities, find work. Ontario Summer Jobs programs run between April and September and include:

- A \$2 per hour hiring incentive for businesses and community organization to hire students for up to 16 weeks.
- Free job-search and self-marketing support to help students find summer jobs.
- The Summer Company program, which provides students with up to \$3,000 to help them start up and run their own summer business.
- Jobs in provincial government ministries and agencies.

The Ontario government has helped more than 210,000 students find summer jobs over the past three years.

Ontario Summer Jobs is a part of Employment Ontario, which offers close to \$1 billion in training and employment services to more than 900,000 people through 1200 service providers in all regions of the province.

"Giving young people insight into the working world helps to inform their education and career choices," said Bentley. "By investing in our youth, we are strengthening our greatest competitive advantage – our people."

Employers and students can find information about Ontario Summer Jobs programs and services by calling Employment Ontario at 1-800-387-5656 or online at ontario.ca/employment-ontario.

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