

**SHERRY HUNT, REGIONAL WOMEN'S COMMITTEE REP
REPORT TO THE PRAIRIE REGION COUNCIL
December 2 – 4, 2021**

RWC Highlights

Since the last PRC meeting the Regional Women's Committees have all received the 2020 reporting packages, with most committees in good standing or close and working with regional staff towards that goal. There has been some turn over in executive positions on many Regional Women's committees due to factors such as pandemic fatigue and retirement. The women of the region are ready to rebuild after a difficult couple of pandemic years, and continue the work of The Union and of the women's movement.

The Winnipeg Regional Women's Committee met in September and hosted a guest speaker. Colleen Syms from the Manitoba Association of Women's Shelters (MAWS) presented an overview of MAWS and its function. The Saskatoon Women's Committee volunteered at the Sisters in Spirit Walk (October 4, 2021) and helped by handing out lunches to participants. That committee also hosted a speaker this fall, Myrna LaPlante from Iskwewuk E-wichitiwitochik, an organization that arose from the crisis of Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). Our Regina Committee plans to host a Kitchen Table Conversation on December 15th, discussing violence against women, and plan to open the event to the entire region (stay tuned for more details!). Our Edmonton committee is planning actions around child care and looking into a visual journaling project. The Calgary Committee met in November and I am looking forward to seeing their plans for the New Year. The Lethbridge Committee is making plans for January hopes to host a "She-covery Café", inviting local women, recently elected (some re-elected) to our municipal governments for discussion on how we can work together to improve the lives of women's and girls in our community.

Chair of the Saskatoon Women's Committee, Corrine Mckay retired from public service in November 2021. I would like to recognize Corrine's valuable contributions of time, energy and efforts to the PSAC Prairies Women's program; as well as thank her for her dedication to the membership and for the work the committee has done their community under her leadership. Thank you, and congratulations on your retirement Corrine!

National Women's Conference

After having been postponed from 2020, the National Women's Conference (*Women Have the Power: Let's Use It!*) was held, September 22-26, 2021. Over 150 women delegates from across the country participated online. Colleen Coffey, PSAC Atlantic Regional Executive Vice-President chaired the conference, which offered a combination of speakers and panel discussions as well as the regular conference business of resolutions debate.

On the first full conference day, PSAC National Executive Vice-President, Sharon DeSousa gave delegates an overview of the PSAC Gender Equity Task Force Report and discussed barriers to women's participation in our union. That afternoon featured a

leadership panel. Friday was spent mainly dealing with resolutions debate (13 resolutions were passed over the course of the conference and will go forward to PSAC National Triennial convention for consideration and debate).

Saturday, delegates enjoyed a timely panel discussion: "Claiming our Power: Resistance and Resilience." The panel featured: Faye Johnstone, a public speaker, consultant, educator and community organizer, whose areas of expertise include LGBTQ+ and trans inclusion, social policy, child and youth mental health, sex education and anti-oppression; Julie Lalonde, a survivor and women's rights advocate, author, and educator, who's work deals with [sexual violence](#), [harassment](#), and bystander intervention; and Rabia Khedr, the founder of the Canadian Association of Muslims with Disabilities (CAM-D), a community activist, and a commissioner on the Ontario Human Rights Commission. The discussion was informative and at times provocative and will no doubt be in the minds of delegates as they go forward in their equity and anti-oppression work.

A highlight of the conference was the keynote presentation by Sarain Fox, an Anishinaabe activist, broadcaster and filmmaker. Her joyful, enthusiastic presence could be felt despite the distance, and her empowering words, for me, reinforced the empowerment delegates were feeling after sharing the week together..

Two delegates from the conference were selected to go to the PSAC National Triennial Convention. Missy Taylor won the 1st delegate position, and Karen Sutton won the 2nd delegate position. During conference breakout sessions, delegates met in their respective region "breakout room" and each did a strategic planning exercise, looking at engagement of women in our union. Responses and ideas were collected from these discussions and will help inform my work on the Regional Women's Committee portfolio for the coming term. Thank you to the organising committee, PSAC staff and leadership, as well as all of the delegates and observers for such a top notch conference experience!

Self Identification Initiative

The PSAC Prairies website now features a self identification portal where members can sign up to get information and updates from PRC representatives. Each Equity Group Representative as well as the Representative for Young Workers and the RWC Representative has a profile on the page and are given contact information for those that opt into their respective group. I look forward to using this tool to connect with PSAC women in the Region and to encourage prairies women to join their Regional Women's Committees.

Conclusion and Next Steps

I'm looking forward to connecting more with women in the region in the weeks and months ahead. The responses gathered at the National Women's Conference breakout sessions indicate that women in the region are looking for ways of connecting and sharing and supporting each other. The online nature of pandemic organising has left

many feeling slightly detached from each other and even our union. This is in addition to the barriers women already experience in union work, as we learned from the Gender Equity Task force Report. My goal is to help create and support opportunities for PSAC Prairies women to connect with each other, and with their communities. I am excited for a 2022 full of empowerment, creativity and activism with the women in the PSAC Prairies Region!

RWC Representative Activities since the last PRC meeting:

PRC RWC Rep, RWC Chairs Call – September 21, 2021

National Women’s Conference - September 22-26 (Virtual)

Sisters in Spirit Lethbridge - October 4, 2021

PSAC Prairies All Committee Call - October 26, 2021

Lethbridge Regional Women’s Committee meeting - November 1, 2021

Respectfully submitted, and in solidarity,

Sherry Hunt (she/her)
RWC Representative
Prairies Regional Council

I acknowledge that I live in Treaty 7 Territory and the land on which I stand is the traditional territory of the Blackfoot Confederacy comprised of the Kainai Nation, Piikani Nation, and Siksika Nation; and of the Ktunaxa, Metis, Stony and Tsu’tinna people.