

Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) Conference August 18 – 21, 2013, Ottawa, Ontario

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference is an annual event. This year it took place in Ottawa. The conference brings together city councillors and municipal staff as well as provincial ministers and their staff to discuss issues of interest to municipalities.

CUPE Ontario sends representatives from the OMECC Committee to see the issues that our employers are concerned with. This year's contingent was led by Secretary-Treasurer Candace Rennick.

This is the second year that I have attended the AMO Conference as the Library Workers of Ontario Committee representative.

CUPE Ontario also staffs a booth on the trade floor.

Overall, I perceived a change in the environment from last year's conference, perhaps as a result of a premier who is more conciliatory and is in the position of a minority government.

The four main themes this year seemed to be interest arbitration with a focus on reducing police and fire costs, liability insurance, infrastructure and pension reform.

Two of the highlights for me are the Leader's Speeches from the three (3) major parties in Ontario: Kathleen Wynne, Liberal, Andrea Horvath, NDP, and Tim Hudak, Progressive Conservative. The response to Hudak's agenda which includes a strong anti-union element was noticeably more restrained than it had been last year. The second highlight is the minister's panel where the audience is allowed to pose questions directly to the ministers.

I attended three (3) sessions this year: the Planning Process: Simplified or Not, The new state of municipal infrastructure and the annual HR update by Hicks Morley.

Overall, I found the conference to be interesting and we can certainly get a feel as to the directions that our employers are moving in. There are some very good opportunities for CUPE Ontario to network at the conference.

Most of the focus at the conference is on energy, solid waste and water. Bicycling initiatives were also discussed at a morning breakfast session. There is certainly a need for our employers, perhaps from the Federation of Ontario Public Libraries (FOPL), to attend in some way to make our issues known.

In Solidarity,

Maureen

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