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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

ACTRA and Steel - Stronger together



Dear Member:



April 14, 2005 - Yesterday I had the honour of signing an exciting strategic partnership agreement between ACTRA and the United Steelworkers in front of 3,000 people at the convention in Las Vegas. It was quite a thrill, and definitely one of the highlights of my year as your National President.

I am very pleased about this new partnership, and the opportunity it presents for both organizations to learn from each other and share vital resources. This bond makes ACTRA stronger and louder as we strive to improve the creative and working lives of people across the country.

ACTRA is not merging or affiliating with the USW. Each union fully retains its independence and autonomy, but we will be working closely together in the months to come to learn from each other, to share best practices where there is mutual advantage, and to team up on some of the public policy issues that are common to both unions.

What could the USW and ACTRA possibly have in common? More than you might think. With over 1.5 million members, the USW is the largest and most powerful private sector union in North America. They have a long history of lobbying governments and employers and speaking up for the preservation of our Canadian values. We share a lot in our views of how to build strong Canadian cultural industries and work with them to confront the numerous threats to our country's cultural sovereignty.

ACTRA wants to bring our campaigns on film and TV issues into the labour movement and to form a coalition to protect Canada's cultural sovereignty. The more partners we have in this fight - the better. The USW is a proven leader in partnering with like-minded organizations and campaigning on public issues.

Our new alliance with Steel will also enhance our ability to negotiate the best terms and working conditions for our members. Our industry has changed immensely since ACTRA was formed more than 60 years ago and recently our main employer was the CBC. Now more than half of our members' work comes from multinational media-conglomerates, many headquartered in the U.S. Steel has a solid record of working with multinational corporations. Their valuable experience will be extremely useful as we plan for the future of our industry. For our part - ACTRA is viewed as one of the leading experts in negotiating agreements on behalf of self-employed, independent contractors. This is a new area for Steel - and one in which we are looking to ACTRA for expertise and advice.

The values and goals of ACTRA remain unchanged. We always have, and always will be, a pe run by and for performers. Reaching out to other unions who share our values and common in make us stronger as we grow to meet the challenges of a rapidly changing industry.

I invite you to read more on our new partnership - more details can be found below. I am confi will join me in celebrating and embracing this promising new friendship.



Thor Bishopric
ACTRA President

Questions?

NATIONAL ACTRA – USW Strategic Alliance FAQ

What's going on?

On April 13, 2005, ACTRA National and ACTRA Toronto signed an alliance and services agre United Steelworkers. The “alliance” means the two unions are going to look for ways to work to protect each other’s jurisdictions. The “services agreement” means the two unions are going to cooperate on public policy, organizing, training of staff, and contract research among other :

What does all of this mean for an average ACTRA member?

It means that ACTRA, their union, will be extending its reach, expanding its access to skill train resources, and will be tackling its work with the benefit of a growing set of alliances.

We’re going to keep working on our members’ priorities – like the need for more Canadian dor in a stronger coalition of like-minded unions.

Why is ACTRA entering into a strategic alliance with USW?

Our industry has undergone enormous changes. Thirty years ago, the CBC was the principal € members and, consequently, ACTRA’s principal counter-party at the bargaining table. Today, television industry is a fully globalized business and our negotiating teams are bargaining, dire indirectly, with vertically integrated multi-national media companies, usually based in the Unite

We are exploring ways to take advantage of the USW’s considerable influence and experience and bargaining to assist our own public policy and collective bargaining work.

It is also worth noting too that, as we have become an effective competitor in the international we have attracted the attention of other players who have sought from time to time, either to o jurisdiction or to attempt to disrupt production here in order to drive work elsewhere. The strate gives ACTRA a measure of confidence in facing such organizational challenges.

What does ACTRA get out of this partnership?

This alliance is an international extension of ACTRA’s well-established policy of building partn as many resources as possible on current challenges to our working terms and conditions.

Nationally, the Canadian Coalition of Audio Visual Unions (CCAU) and the recently formed Ca and Television Industry Council (CFTIC) are two more examples of industry partnerships that : around regulatory policy.

The USW is a powerful ally with a well-established track record in political action, coalition buil organizing, collective bargaining, staff and member education and a deep commitment to fight globalization with globalization. In Canada alone the USW represents the interests of 250,000 workers through the use of targeted political action campaigns. These workers are not only po

the struggle to get our message to government. They are also taxpayers whose contributions in a highly regulated and subsidized broadcast system, which has utterly failed to deliver on the promise of the Broadcast Act – to let Canadians tell their own stories on their own airwaves. This alliance gives us an opportunity to insert a cultural message into the labour agenda.

What is the USW?

The United Steel Workers is the largest private sector union in North America, with a highly diverse membership that includes not only manufacturing and industrial workers but also an increasing number of employees in the service industry. We like the fact that ACTRA and the USW are like-minded on many issues. We like their size and depth of resources. We like that they operate at a global scale just as our employers do.

Why the Steelworkers and not some other large union?

ACTRA has a long-standing relationship with USW – they have represented our staff since they are like-minded organizations with a focus on both public policy and organizing and bargaining. USW is strong in both Canada and the United States. That makes them an attractive alliance partner. More than half of the work in Canada in our industry comes from companies headquartered in the US. USW is familiar with strategic alliances – it has 11 others with unions around the world.

Does this 'strategic alliance' mean that ACTRA is merging with the USW?

No. A merger or affiliation agreement with another organization would require changes to our constitution and by-laws and would require ratification by the membership. This strategic alliance is an agreement that creates a forum for our two organizations to exchange information to support each other's efforts in areas of mutual interest and also defines a mechanism that allows us to share resources and work together in pursuit of common goals.

Will we need to be steelworkers to be actors now?

ACTRA is remaining ACTRA. Nothing changes in our constitution or our contracts. We are still independent. We have simply added another alliance to grow our strength.

What does the USW get out of this partnership?

As a result of this alliance, ACTRA will play a more active role at the Canadian Labour Congress. We are not an insignificant ally. As one of the 15 largest unions in the Congress, voting our own voice on the Council and represented on its committees, we will potentially increase the USW's network of 'like-minded' unions by approximately ten percent. The USW has also expressed interest in making use of ACTRA National's developing research capabilities as well as learning from us about organizing independent workers and negotiating and administering collective agreements on their special area of expertise.

Are we going to be making any payments to the USW?

If the USW decides to take advantage of the services agreement and to borrow ACTRA staff from us, we will be making payments to ACTRA. If ACTRA likewise decided to borrow resources from the USW (for example, organizers) we would cover the associated costs. Otherwise there are no fees or charges contemplated in this agreement.

What has been agreed about the Canadian Labour Congress?

ACTRA is going to take its proper place at the CLC after a long absence, and we are going to be at the CLC with our full membership in partnership with the USW so that we aren't alone within the CLC advocating for our issues.

There is an extra cost associated with this decision. Paying our full dues will cost ACTRA approximately an additional \$120,000. ACTRA National and ACTRA Toronto have agreed to co-fund the new, high-profile initiative 50-50.

What is the CLC?

The Canadian Labour Congress is the national voice of the Canadian labour movement. ACTF member of the CLC for more than thirty years. A decade ago we stepped away from the CLC ; cutting measure. From a position of strength thanks to this alliance with a major affiliate, ACTF planning to take a leadership role within the CLC and will be looking for new allies on our cultu

What does this alliance mean to ACTRA's negotiations with producers?

Nothing has changed with our collective agreements. ACTRA will continue to negotiate with pr the same legal framework we always have.

On the other hand, much might change in the way ACTRA approaches difficult bargaining situ alliance builds the power and effectiveness of our union. ACTRA will have access to significan training and resources that will be relevant should producers fail to be reasonable at the barga

Isn't it true that some of our ACTRA staff members are represented by the USW? What effect will this strategic alliance have on our staff agreements?

The USW members on ACTRA's staff will remain USW members, protected by their agreemer supported in their bargaining with us by the USW. If this ever becomes a serious issue betwee ACTRA, we'll both have to reassess the alliance.

What do the Steelworkers know about Canadian cultural issues?

Not nearly as much as they are about to learn! Leading on Canadian cultural issues is **OUR** jo

The USW is a highly diversified union that speaks out on issues affecting working people in m: They have been leaders in the fight to preserve Canada's public healthcare system. To them v important, well-organized and highly motivated sector of the labour force that has become a st the debate on Canadian cultural policy – an issue of interest to the 250,000 USW members w/ Canadian taxpayers.

While the players in our industry may be new to them, they have a deep understanding of the i globalization on local employment and a wealth of experience in getting a message delivered r Hill. What we stand to gain from working with the USW is an increased reach and power in our security and stability in our jurisdiction; and a chance to learn from a large and successful unic can do a better job for our members.

Why am I hearing about this after the fact? Doesn't a strategic alliance require ratificati members?

The alliance documents contain very strict and unambiguous language that protects ACTRA's independence, autonomy, constitution, bylaws, assets and membership. This strategic alliance merger nor an affiliation. It is a time-limited, non-binding agreement that spells out ways that o have chosen to work together on a case-by-case basis. It is an administrative arrangement an does not require ratification any more than does our participation in other partnerships like the CFTIC.

What are the terms of the agreement?

The full text of the agreement will be available on the ACTRA National website (www.actra.ca) includes a brief introductory paragraph about ACTRA and the USW, outlines our shared histor introduces the alliance as an agreement that:

... provides thee to unions with an opportunity to support each other and to work together on i common interest.

This new relationship, while preserving the autonomy and independence of both unions, provic real-world forum to exchange ideas, define areas of mutual interest, and develop cooperative : well as a mechanism for the sharing of resources in the pursuit of common aims.

Does this mean that ACTRA is on strike when the USW is on strike?

No. As separate organizations with separate constitutions, agreements, memberships and jurisdictions each continue to operate as we have always done with the added option of sharing resources on a case-by-case basis.

The USW represents workers in lots of different industries. What if I was shooting on location there was a USW picket line?

In principle it is always a good idea to respect a picket line.

That said, if the employer is not in violation of your contract you are obligated to perform the service and may cross a picket line to do so. As an ACTRA member you are neither a Steelworker nor under their jurisdiction. You are not obligated to risk your personal safety, however, and on those occasions you may refuse to cross the line.

How will we manage disagreements or differences of opinion with USW?

Pretty much the way we do now. As fully independent and autonomous organizations with separate constitutions and memberships we can simply agree to disagree.