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New IUPAT building a one-stop shop for its members

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by LINDSEY COLE Dec 11, 2014

The new International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) District Council 46 building is a one-stop-shop that members can be proud to call home, says the union's business manager.



The new 30,000-square-foot facility is located at 132 Toro Road in Toronto and came with a \$10-million price tag. - Photo: IUPAT

"Up until now we've had various headquarters," says Joe Russo. "This is the first building that we've had in our history that I think is a real showpiece for our members. The fact that we now have a three-storey, 30,000-square-foot building which basically houses all of our needs...it shows how our union has matured over our history to where we are today."

Construction for the \$10-million building, which is located at 132 Toro Road in Toronto, began in April 2013 and "really kicked forward" in the summer of 2014, states Russo.

While the grand opening was held earlier this month (Dec. 4), he states the bulk of the move-in took place in November.

Russo describes several special features within the new space that help make it a welcoming place for the membership. The second floor houses union staff offices, he states, while half of the first floor is dedicated to benefit plan administrators for those with claim matters, and the other half is a union hall.

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"We never had that (a union hall) at any of our previous buildings," Russo explains, adding up to about 125 members fit into the new hall. "Now we can have it (meetings) here. That same union hall will also double as a banquet hall."

The basement is a full storage facility and the third floor is large board room for union representative meetings.

"We don't have to pay for storage, we don't have to pay for union hall meetings, and we don't have to pay for union representative meetings," anymore, he says, adding the benefits are significant. "It's very functional for us."

The new facility is also located directly next door to the former space at 130 Toro Road.

"Where we were before, we also shared it with our painting and glazing training centre, so we were very tight in there," he says, but there are plans in the works for that building as well. While the training centre will still be housed there, in the front of the facility will be a union health centre for members, Russo explains, which is currently in development.

"So now we kind of have a campus. Right next door to each other you have our main new facility, but our old facility still houses our training centre and will become home to a union health facility as well. It's truly a one-stop-shop."

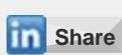
Russo states the union worked with Architect Frank Alaimo to design the building and also had a number of union members on site helping with the work.

"The building was built with 100 per cent union trades," he says, adding the General Contractor was Harbridge and Cross. "Our members who were working on this building went that extra mile to make sure that the work was absolutely perfect. The members have been overjoyed. The building stands as a testament to the hard work and pride of our union members, it is a symbol for that. It shows what can be accomplished when we work hard and work together."

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