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UNITED STEELWORKERS (USW)

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Steelworkers ratify four-year agreement with Canfor in BC interior operations

BURNABY, BC, March 9 /CNW/ - United Steelworkers (USW) members employed by Canfor in 15 operations in the BC northern and southern interior regions have ratified a four-year collective agreement, retroactive to June 30, 2009.

Members in USW Locals 1-424, 1-427 and 1-405 voted in majority favour of the agreement that was reached on February 22, 2010.

The agreement provides union members with an unprecedented expansion of seniority retention and improved severance in the event of a partial or permanent plant closure.

The union's BC Interior Bargaining Committee will utilize the Canfor agreement to be a basic pattern agreement for negotiations with West Fraser and employer associations CONIFER (the Council on Northern Interior Forest Labour Relations) and the IFLRA (Interior Forest Labour Relations Association, which represent employers in the northern and southern interiors, respectively.

The Canfor-USW agreement provides wage increases of 2 percent in years 3 and 4, protects the members' Long Term Disability Plan and includes strong health and safety language. Improved life insurance and medical travel coverage are also part of the settlement as well as assistance for apprentices.

The agreement also includes an innovative employee investment model linked to a direct payback schedule and potential profit sharing.

The USW, Canada's largest industrial union, represents about 11,000 forest workers in the BC Interior.

For further information: Bob Matters, USW Wood Council Chair, (604) 683-1117, (604) 996-4476

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