



## **Day of Mourning: Enforcing Westray Law is Needed**

***For Immediate Release***

**April 26, 2017**

Every year, on April 28, the National Day of Mourning, people come together remember the workers who lost their lives or were injured while working. Day of Mourning ceremonies are taking place in: Bathurst, Fredericton, Miramichi, Moncton and Saint John.

“Today, not only do we remember those who have fallen and support their families, but we also come together to show our dedication towards improving health and safety provisions and their enforcement,” says Chuck Rouse, the Vice-President responsible for the New Brunswick Federation of Labour’s Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Committee. “Every New Brunswicker deserves to come home at the end of their work day healthy and safe.”

In 2016, approximately 10,500 New Brunswickers were injured on the job while 16 people lost their lives as a result of a workplace injury or disease.

This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Westray coal mine explosion that killed 26 miners on May 9, 1992. This disaster led to a change in the criminal code, also known as the Westray Law. Now when criminal negligence leads to a workplace fatality, it is a crime and not merely an accident. Unfortunately, this law is not being enforced.

“We are calling on the provincial government to mark this year’s 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Westray coal mine explosion by taking the necessary steps to enforce the Westray Act,” says Patrick Colford, President of the New Brunswick Federation of Labour.

April 28<sup>th</sup> was first established in Canada as the National Day of Mourning for workers killed, injured or disabled on the job. It was recognized as such by the Government of Canada in the year 2000, at the urging of the Canadian Labour Congress. April 28<sup>th</sup> commemorates the date that the first comprehensive workers’ compensation legislation was adopted in Canada. It was adopted on April 28, 1914 by the province of Ontario. April 28<sup>th</sup> is now recognized in countries throughout the world as a day to remember, reflect and renew efforts to keep workers safe and healthy.

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For information, please contact:

**Chuck Rouse**  
NBFL Secretary-Treasurer  
NBFL VP, Occupational Health, Safety and Environment Committee  
(506) 850-8510 (cell)

**Patrick Colford**  
NBFL President  
(506) 857-2125 (work)  
(506) 381-8969 (cell)