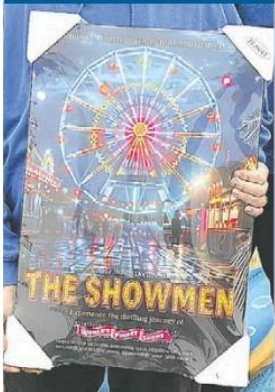




Don Guest, president of the Brantford and District Labour Council, holds a wreath that was placed in Lorne Park during the annual Day of Mourning ceremony on Tuesday. The ceremony is held to honour those who have passed as a result of a workplace injury or illness. *VINCENT BALL*

'WORKPLACE SAFETY IS NOT A PRIVILEGE, IT IS A RIGHT'

INSIDE



Labour and civic leaders gather for Day of Mourning ceremony

VINCENT BALL

Employers must treat psychological injuries with the same urgency as physical ones and take real steps to prevent harm, the president of the Brantford and District Labour Council says.

"This year, we are also recognizing something too often unseen – psychological injuries in the workplace," Don Guest said Tuesday. "Injuries like PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder) burnout, anxiety and depression may not be visible but they are real, they are serious and they too are preventable."

"Psychological health is occupational health."

Guest spoke at the annual Day of Mourning ceremony held Tuesday at Lorne Park in Brantford. The ceremony is an opportunity to pause to remember those who have been killed, injured or made

ill because of their work.

Ceremonies have traditionally focused on physical injuries, but mental and psychological illnesses have emerged as a growing workplace issue.

"Behind every statistic is a person, a co-worker, a friend, a loved one," Guest said. "And when nearly half of workers say their job is the most stressful part of their day and psychological illness remains the leading cause of disability in Canada."

"We must be clear; this is not an individual burden; it is a workplace responsibility."

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Ceremony

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Guest said no one should leave for work in the morning and not return home safely, physically or mentally.

The National Day of Mourning is not only a time to remember those workers who did not go home after work.

“It is a call to action for all of us who remain,” Guest said. “Every name, every life lost, is a reminder that workplace safety is not a privilege, it is a right.”

Guest said the best way to honour the fallen is to continue to demand safe workplaces, stronger protections and real accountability from those who put profit ahead of people.



A large crowd of people gathered at Lorne Park on Tuesday (April 28) for the annual Day of Mourning ceremony. The ceremony honours those who have died as a result of workplace injury or illness. VINCENT BALL

“We owe that to the families who live with loss every day and to every worker who steps onto the job tomorrow,” Guest said.

Brantford Mayor Kevin Davis, and city councillors Richard Carpenter, Mandy Samwell and Brian Van Tilborg also attended the ceremony. They were joined by former

NDP MPP Brad Ward, now president of the Brant NDP federal and provincial riding associations, former Liberal MPP Dave Levac and representatives of several public and private-sector unions.

Wreaths to honour those who passed on the job were put in place for the ceremony.

Those attending also heard from Chris Carpenter, a training services representative for the Workers Health and Safety Centre (WHSC) servicing South Centre Ontario.

Carpenter said that over the past 10 years accepted claims for WSIB compensation has more than doubled, and that is just the tip of the iceberg.

Noting that federal and provincial governments are working to build a stronger economy, Carpenter said similar leadership is needed to strengthen worker mental health protection.

Carpenter said he is heartened to learn that the federal government is listening to the pleas of those advocating for stronger mental health protection in the workplace.

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