

UPS Agrees to Early Negotiations; Members Share Contract Concerns at Proposal Meetings

Local 63 UPS members gathered in force in mid-August to voice their concerns with Local officials in preparation for early bargaining talks with the shipping and freight giant.

IBT General President James P. Hoffa announced at the 27th International Convention in June that UPS had agreed to begin early contract negotiations. This was a major victory for the union that had stood firm against the company, demanding that talks begin this year.

"We can't afford to wait to protect the pensions and health care benefits of our UPS members and we won't. UPS knows we will do whatever it takes to make sure Teamsters at UPS are rewarded for their hard work and dedication," Hoffa said.

Protecting medical benefits and pensions is at the top of the priority list for Local members. "Those are the main issues," Local 63 Business Agent Sam Stewart noted. "But other issues came forward as well.

Stewart said overworked UPS drivers are still looking for relief from excessive overtime. Contract language first added in the 2002 agree-



ment outlined double time pay for hours in excess of 9.5, and was supposed to ensure the company's commitment to lowering drivers' hours.

"This has been a huge problem for a number of years, and we continue to file grievances. But the language in the 2002 agreement

They've been worked so hard for so long, they're just looking for some kind of relief.

On the flip side, the company has been limiting the combo employees' work day to as close to eight hours as possible, making it difficult for them to receive any overtime.



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simply wasn't strong enough to make certain that members don't have to work those excessive hours," Stewart explained.

"The members are looking for stronger language and stronger penalties for the excessive overtime.

"The part-timers have been getting the extra work, and many of the combo workers want a piece of that overtime," Stewart said.

All tallied, Local 63 UPS members brought to the union roughly 50 proposals for either new additions or

changes to the contract. The Local will now meet with other union officials in the Southwest Rider to collectively screen and streamline the proposals. Once that process is complete, the refined proposals will be delivered to the IBT. Negotiations with UPS are expected to begin in early fall.

The UPS agreement covers roughly 200,000 members across the country. Locally, 4,700 members working at nine facilities are under the five-year contract set to expire August 1, 2008. Having labor and management meet early to resolve major



Business Agent and President Ken Haarala

contract issues is in the best interest of both parties.

“The employees felt we should enter negotiations early,” Stewart underscored. “When tens of thousands of petitions from the members were delivered to the company, they could hardly disagree.

Stewart also noted that UPS faces fierce competition from DHL and FedEx. Protecting and enhancing their customer base is critical to the company’s continued success.

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