

PROVIDENCE NEWSPAPER GUILD, AFL-CIO

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Agreement Reached

The Guild and the Company today reached a tentative agreement for a new contract to take effect Jan. 1, 2008. The bargaining committee has unanimously recommended its approval. A Jan. 9 ratification vote will be scheduled.

Highlights

- **Wages and term:** A three-year contract with a 3 percent raise in the first year; 2 percent or whatever is received by the Teamsters or Pressmens' Union, whichever is higher in the second year; and the same raise as the other unions in the final year.
- **Medical benefits:** No change, employees will still pay 15 percent of the health care co-pay.
- **Upgrades:** Upgrades for 31 employees, with wage increases ranging from of 5.2 to 8.7 percent
- **Sales goals:** The Company will now provide advertising reps with sales incentives within 10 business days of any new goals period.
- **Short-term disability:** Employees will now receive 70 percent of their total pay while out on STD; except following childbirth, which will remain at 100 percent.
- **Cell phone policy:** Employees required to use their cell phones for work will receive a minimum of \$50 a month in reimbursement.
- **Mileage reimbursement:** The auto allowance has been increased to \$50 a week.
- **Online video:** A two-year trial period between Company and Guild has been agreed to on the use of online sound and video on ProJo.com.
- **Leaves of absence:** Long-term disability leaves will be capped at one year and a system of light duty work will be implemented for employees injured on the job

The Details

The term of the contract will run from Jan. 1, 2008 through Dec. 31, 2010. Employees will receive a 3 percent general wage increase in the first year. In the second year, the Guild has negotiated a guaranteed 2 percent wage increase with a "me too" provision that will increase the raise if the Company gives more to the Teamsters or Pressmens' unions. In the final year, no negotiated wage increase, only a "me too" provision applies.

Employees will continue to pay only 15 percent as a health care co-pay during the term of the contract.

Upgrades were sought for several classifications of employees and 31 received them. The Company agreed to upgrade the largest class, 20 copy editors, advancing them from classification 070 to 060. This will give them a 5.2 percent increase in pay. Nine publications clerks (not including former delivery clerks) were upgraded from classification 012 to 011, creating a new classification of sales assistants. The upgrade will result in an 8.7 percent increase

in pay. Two online designers were upgraded from classification 080 to 040 and giving them an 8.3 percent pay increase. Editorial assistants in the sports department received a \$500 bonus in lieu of an upgrade. Also, the Guild has helped to define the work flow in the pre-publishing department for print and online ads. For ads with a layout, the work will be done by the pre-publishing specialists and for ads with no previous layout the work will be done by creative specialists. When pre-pub specialists are required to work a majority of their shift with no layout they will be small grid adjusted. Creative services and pre-pub employees asked to work with "Flash" technology and similar software will be grid adjusted to online producer.

In what was a very important issue among advertising employees, the setting of incentive goals was nailed down on the final day of bargaining. There will now be language guaranteeing that all ad salespeople shall be provided sales incentive goals within 10 business days of the start of any incentive measurement period. The Company will retain the right to modify the goals during any such period.

The Guild has agreed to Company's proposal on sick pay and short-term disability. This issue was the Company's most important issue so that it could implement the policy company-wide. No employee with less than six months of service will be eligible; other employees will now receive 70 percent of gross pay instead of 100 percent. The Guild was able to insure that anyone out following the birth of a child would continue to receive the 100 percent. Other details include: Successive periods of disability shall be treated as one unless the employee returns for at least 90 consecutive days; and for medical leaves of over 30 days, only the first 30 days of absence will count as time worked for the purpose of calculating vacation entitlement.

A new cell phone policy and a change in the auto allowance have also been negotiated. The Company, seeking to get out of the phone business, will now give employees who are required to use their phones a minimum of \$50 a month, while employees with higher call volumes will receive higher allowances. Employees required to maintain a vehicle for work will now receive \$50 a week, and per mile overage reimbursement shall be increased to the IRS rate.

There will be a two-year trial period for the use of sound and video on ProJo.com. The work will be voluntary, training will be provided and no one will be disciplined for failing to master the technology. At the end of the trial period, the Company and Guild will review the program and determine if and how it will continue.

Leaves of absence have been brought into line with industry norms, capping the amount of time spent on leave at one-year, down from the previous two-year limit.

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