

GUILD LEADER

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A.H. Belo Wage Freeze Does not Apply to Guild Workers

What Our Contract Says:

Article 18 Wages

Section 2:

Effective January 1, 2009, minimum salaries for each classification shall be increased by 2 percent or by the same percentage general wage increase as may be granted by the Company to the Teamsters and Pressmen's Unions, whichever is greater.

Section E. 2:

There shall be no reduction in earnings during this Agreement except in cases of transfer to a lower classification due to inability to perform the required work or voluntary transfer to a lower classification at the written request of an employee.

The Corporate-wide wage freeze announced today by the A.H. Belo Company, owners of the Providence Journal, does not apply to ProJo employees covered by the Guild contract.

The Guild contract calls for a two percent wage increase in January. Prior to today's announcement, management representatives assured the Guild that because of the contract the freeze does not apply to Guild employees.

The company has not asked, nor has the Guild offered, to reopen the contract to discuss a wage freeze. Under U.S labor law, the company cannot force the reopening of the contract.

The wage freeze marks the third time this year the A.H. Belo newspaper chain has taken steps to reduce its payroll costs.

In the spring, A.H Belo announced it was doing away with annual bonuses "profit performance bonuses." Under the contract bonuses are discretionary.

This was followed in August by the announcement of buyouts and layoffs, which so far have resulted in the elimination of 53 jobs in Journal's the news and advertising departments, and about 500 jobs throughout the chain.