



NEWS

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Lynsey Kryzwick: 212-388-3696; 917-683-4474
Kate Ferranti 212-388-3469

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LOCAL 32BJ LAUNCHES TALKS TO INCREASE WAGES AND BENEFITS FOR MORE THAN 1,800 FAIRFIELD COUNTY CLEANERS

Stamford, CT - Negotiations for a new union contract for more than 1,800 commercial property service workers in Fairfield County began today between Local 32BJ and representatives from several cleaning contractors, including W & M, UNICCO Service Company, American Building Maintenance (ABM), OneSource and Temco Services. Local 32BJ members clean more than 90 percent of Fairfield County's large commercial office space.

"Fairfield County's hard-working cleaners should receive the raises and health care coverage they need to support their families in one of the wealthiest counties in the country," said Kurt Westby, Local 32BJ Connecticut Director. "The commercial real estate market is booming, and the office cleaners who work to keep these buildings running should also benefit from the increased demand for office space."

Local 32BJ members in Fairfield County are fighting for a wage increase and fully employer-paid health insurance for all members. Increasing the minimum number of working hours is also a priority.

Failure to reach a new contract by December 31, 2007, when the current contract expires, could lead to a strike by more than 1,800 property service workers at nearly 200 facilities across the County, including the Stamford Plaza and Financial Center, Greenwich Plaza and Office Park, Bridgeport's People's Bank, Merritt 7 Corporate Park in Norwalk and the campuses of Fairfield University and UCONN-Stamford.

Fairfield commercial property service workers are negotiating their contract alongside 1,800 Local 32BJ members in Hartford County and nearly 50,000 Local 32BJ members from four other northeastern states and Washington, DC. Most of the contracts are set to expire on December 31, 2007. Currently, more than 150,000 people - workers and their family members - receive health care through 32BJ commercial contracts.

"I'm a single-parent trying to create a better future for my son," said Pedro Alva, a cleaner in the Stamford Financial Center. "My budget's already stretched to the limit, and I don't know how I'll cover my son's annual doctor visits, let alone emergencies, if we lose our health insurance."

According to Cushman and Wakefield, Stamford is now considered to be a Manhattan "submarket," and Fairfield County, as a whole, is a new home to some of the world's most exclusive financial service firms. Since the last contract negotiations in 2004, the vacancy rate has significantly decreased while rental rates have seen sharp increases, with a 22 percent rise in just the past year.

"Fairfield County is thriving as a new hub for financial services," said Mike Fishman, Local 32BJ President. "Office cleaners here should have family-sustaining wages and benefits comparable to the members in New York City."

With more than 85,000 members in six states and Washington, DC, including more than 4,500 in Connecticut, Local 32BJ is the largest property services union in the country.