



NEWS

SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

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CONTRACT TALKS BEGIN FOR MORE THAN 1,000 LONG ISLAND CLEANERS

East Meadow, NY – Negotiations for a new union contract for more than 1,000 commercial property service workers in Nassau and Suffolk Counties began today between Local 32BJ and representatives from several cleaning contractors, including A&A Maintenance, Mayco, American Maintenance, First Quality Maintenance, OneSource and American Building Maintenance (ABM).

“Long Island’s hard-working office cleaners should receive the wages and benefits they need to support their families in an area with a very expensive cost of living,” said Shirley Aldebol, Local 32BJ Long Island Director. “With Long Island’s commercial rents at an all-time high, the commercial real estate market can afford to provide raises and benefits to the workers who keep its office buildings running.”

Local 32BJ members on Long Island are fighting to increase the wage floor for commercial cleaners for the first time in nearly a decade. Expanding fully employer-paid health care coverage and increasing the minimum number of working hours per shift are also priorities.

Failure to reach a new contract by December 31, 2007, when the current contract expires, could lead to a strike of more than 1,000 property service workers at buildings throughout Long Island, including the RexCorps Plaza, the Omni Building, Nassau Community College, Newsday offices and Lake Success Office Park.

“My family’s struggling without health care coverage,” said Rosa Romera, a cleaner at OMNI building in Uniondale and mother of two. “I just want to be able to take my boys to the doctor when they get sick, but I can’t afford insurance premiums on my salary.”

Long Island commercial property service workers are negotiating their contract alongside 26,000 Local 32BJ members in New York City and nearly 50,000 members from four other northeastern states and the District of Columbia. 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.

Record high commercial rent prices in both Suffolk and Nassau Counties reflect the growing trend of businesses relocating from Manhattan to Long Island. In Suffolk County, Class A rents are at their highest rate to date, while both Class A and B rental rates in Nassau County have increased nearly 24.8 per cent since the last contract negotiations in 2004.

“Long Island’s commercial real estate market has been drawing businesses from Manhattan,” said Mike Fishman, Local 32BJ President. “Office cleaners here deserve wages that will help them and their families get ahead.”

With more than 85,000 members in six states and Washington, DC, including 1,200 in Nassau and Suffolk Counties on Long Island, Local 32BJ is the largest property services union in the country.

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