



NEWS

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NEW THREE-YEAR CONTRACT WITH UNITED TRANSPORTATION UNION RATIFIED BY MTA BOARD; PACT BENEFITS MTA, EMPLOYEES, CUSTOMERS

The MTA Board today approved a new three-year contract with the United Transportation Union (UTU), the group that represents 4,000 MTA bus and train operators, following ratification by the organization's rank and file Sunday afternoon.

The pact is expected to save the Authority at least \$20 million over the next three years, an amount that will be used to improve customer service, with a focus on expanding bus service. The union also achieved its goals of securing a pay raise for its membership and protecting the jobs, wages and benefits of existing drivers.

Specifically, the three-year contract provides quarterly cost-of-living wage adjustments for all operators, in addition to increases in base pay of 1.5 percent each year.

The MTA expects to achieve cost savings through a number of key changes in the UTU contract including a lower wage tier for newly hired operators, reduction in the Agency's contributions to union member health and welfare benefits and increased use of part-time workers, which will reduce overtime costs.

The contract also enables the MTA to reduce the cost of operating certain lines by hiring new union drivers at a lower hourly rate on new and less-used routes. This gives the Agency new flexibility in serving customers, saves taxpayers dollars and guarantees union jobs. In exchange for this contract provision, the MTA has agreed not to subcontract out existing services.

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MTA Chairman and Los Angeles Mayor Richard J. Riordan said long months of negotiations will be remembered for being "carried out with an eye for securing fair and equitable contracts that would enhance the MTA's flexibility, competitiveness and efficiency and pursuing the goal of no layoffs, no reduction in employee health benefits and no decrease in wage rates for current employees."

"The MTA can now focus on the business of providing quality transportation service to our customers," Riordan said. "The settlement terms with this important union signifies a critical milestone for the MTA, the union's represented employees, L.A. County's taxpayers, and, most importantly, for the transit dependent bus and rail customers of the MTA."

"Throughout the talks, MTA negotiators kept the best interests of passengers in mind," said Interim MTA CEO Linda Bohlinger. "Our approach was simply to put the customer first, while recognizing the important role our employees play in providing quality bus and rail service. I am pleased that the UTA leadership worked cooperatively with us to reach a contract settlement that is truly a win-win situation."

The contracts of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU), which represents 1,700 MTA mechanics and maintenance staff, and the Transportation Communications Union (TCU), which represent 600 MTA clerks, expired June 30 . Negotiations are ongoing with representatives of the two unions.

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