

## Riverside County Bargaining Update

As many of you are the ending date on our MOU is tomorrow, June 30. I wanted to give everyone an update on what's has been happening as well as what I think we can expect.

First of all I want to say that just because our contract has an end date of June 30, it doesn't mean that we will be working without a contract. The terms of a contract remain in place until either a successor agreement is negotiated or impasse is declared. Neither one of those things has happened, so the terms and conditions in place in our current MOU remain in effect.

You may have heard about the County's budget woes, which are real. We had hoped to negotiate a deal similar to the one we have currently, in which we provided the County some relief in the first two years of the contract, but had reasonable raises and expansions of the salary ranges in the during the final two years. The County appears unwilling to enter into a deal that has any new money. They initially proposed a one year deal with no changes. A one year deal with no COLA's is something we could have lived with as long as we could address some other issues- some classifications we need to have studied, increases in the flex benefit, and a number of other issues specific to certain classifications. I'm not privy to whatever discussion is taking place internally at the County, but their negotiator doesn't yet have clear direction from the Board of Supervisors regarding our proposals, and it is still unclear whether the County is going to try to extract concessions from us. There has been some inflammatory rhetoric from one or two Board members that would cause any reasonable person to expect them to come at us with a meat cleaver. I'm unsure how much of this has been political posturing, and how much is a genuine desire to once again attempt to balance the budget on the backs of the good men and women who do the work of this County.

My next meeting with their negotiator is scheduled for the 12th of July. I expect that she will have received very clear direction from the Board by then.

I can assure you of a couple of things. One, we will not be agreeing to concessions. In 2010 through 2012 we made enough concessions to last several recessions. We are not willing to go down that road again. And, we will not bring any agreement for you to consider unless we are convinced that it is the best deal we can get, and that it is a deal that makes sense for our members.

This process can be stressful for the membership, I know. But it is critical that we are patient, careful, and thorough.

I will post updates as I have new information. If not sooner, I will definitely post after my meeting on the 12th.

This isn't our first rodeo, we've all been through this together before. As long as we maintain our resolve and refuse to enter into an inferior agreement simply because there is pressure to do so, we will come out of this in good shape.

As always, I am proud to serve as your Business Manager, and I am confident that at the end of

this process we will have a deal that we can live with.

In Solidarity,

Stephen Switzer, Business Manager