



# TEAMSTERS JOINT COUNCIL 25

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## LOCAL 727 PEPSI MEMBERSHIP RATIFIES FOUR-YEAR CONTRACT

### Beverage Industry Teamsters Secure Back Wages, Improved Health Benefits

More than 600 Pepsi employees represented by Teamsters Local 727 voted by a 3-to-2 margin to ratify a new four-year contract, which includes retroactive wage increases, merged language, improved health care and more stringent job protections.

The Teamster members work out of four Pepsi facilities in Chicago, Elk Grove Village and Kankakee.

“This is the strongest contract this Pepsi membership has ever had, and it merges together four agreements to unite the group under one contract,” said John T. Coli, President of Teamsters Joint Council 25 and Secretary-Treasurer of Local 727. “Although we didn’t get the wage increases our members truly deserve, it’s still a very rich contract with across-the-board improvements.”

The mail ballot count was held July 5 at the local union’s meeting hall in Park Ridge, and the Local 727 Bargaining Committee and other Pepsi members were present. The final vote tally was 171-117 in favor of the contract.

Because the contract was ratified before July 15, employees will move to the company’s Standard Flex Benefits Program by Jan. 1, 2017. The new health insurance program can result in annual per employee savings of up to \$1,500 with identical or improved coverage levels.

The new Employee Relations Committee — composed of union stewards, the union business rep and employer representatives — will meet within the next 45 days to review and discuss all Pepsi company policies, including the attendance policy and rules of conduct. Additionally, the company and union will meet within six months after ratification to discuss tanker trips for transport drivers, and the company and union will meet every six months to discuss Service Advantage Refrigeration Technician staffing levels.

“Even though contract negotiations are done, our work is not,” Coli said. “We will keep asking for members’ input as we move forward and continue fighting to improve working conditions.”

Pepsi members rejected the company’s previous contract offer, but the Local 727 Bargaining Committee and Pepsi management returned to the bargaining table for another 10-hour session on June 10.

Ballot voting was conducted via mail in order to maximize the number of members voting, and the union wanted to give members ample time to review the contract offer and return their ballots. High voter turnout was crucial because, according to the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Constitution, if less than half of the eligible membership votes, a two-thirds majority is required to authorize a strike.

“We have a new contract, but we still need everyone to remain involved and engaged,” Coli said. “Learn your contract, file grievances, stay united. Work with your stewards and union reps to make sure the company is held accountable for its actions. This is your union. We will fight for you, and we are here for — and will always be here for you — no matter what.”

Teamsters Local 727 is an affiliate of Teamsters Joint Council 25, America’s premier labor union for Chicago, Illinois and northwest Indiana.