

# CONTRA COSTA COUNTY BARGAINING UPDATE

## F E B R U A R Y 8 , 2 0 1 0

Your bargaining committee continues working very hard to reach agreement with the County on a first contract. Since the last bargaining update, the committee has worked three evenings, one full weekday with the County, and two full Saturdays.

At our session on Wednesday February 2, we invited our attorney, Peter Saltzman, from the Leonard Carder Law Firm to speak to the County about our proposal of a flexible benefits plan that would allow employees who choose to use money allocated now for existing benefits to apply to a variety of benefit options, including offsetting healthcare costs. Peter has an extensive background in retirement and tax law. He explained to the County representatives our concept of an IRS 125 flexible benefits plan. He explained to them what is permissible under the law and how our idea could be easily adopted and become a benefit for our members and the County. He addressed their concerns about possible increased pension costs and how that could be avoided.

Mr. Saltzman is also advising us on and monitoring the Retirement Board issues on final compensation.

**Package Proposal:** A “package proposal” is constructed so that if the package as a whole is not accepted, we revert to our original position in bargaining, which is no furloughs and the CNA healthcare terms. Under the package proposal, the County may not select elements, as it is only offered in its entirety. Since the County has held to their offer of the Coalition healthcare package, and the same number of furlough days compressed in shorter contract term, we proposed the following package:

**Employee Choice Flexible Benefit Plan:** Although the exact details are yet to be determined, this may include career development, healthcare, and vision care, and other items based on what is permitted under the law.

**Coalition Healthcare Package:** This would include all terms that the Coalition negotiated plus reimbursement to our members for healthcare costs incurred above what they would have seen under the Coalition healthcare benefit.

**Furloughs:** Employees would incur the same number of ATA days that *remain* in the Coalition union agreements at the time of full ratification of a new Local 21 contract. There will be an option for salary smoothing (spreading the percentage decrease over the year) or taking the salary reduction in the same pay period that the ATA days are taken. Local 21 represented employees would be able to schedule ATA days as they now schedule vacation days, lumped together or spread out.

**Term:** Two year agreement from the date of ratification.

Our next scheduled meeting with the County is set Monday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, and will be an all day bargaining session.



### IFPTE Local 21

1182 Market Street

Suite 425

San Francisco, California 94102

Phone: 415-864-2100

Fax: 415-864-2166

E-mail: [ccc@ifpte21.org](mailto:ccc@ifpte21.org)