ACI, Arizona Ratifies New Pact

Local 30 members employed by Alternate Concepts, Inc. (ACI) have reached a new 5-year contract with the private transportation company. ACI provides light rail services for the City of Phoenix, Local 30 represents the transportation supervisors they employ.

Following months of bargaining the parties agreed to a new contract containing increases in wages, multiple benefit improvements, additional paid personal time off, and numerous language changes which enhance the prior Agreement.

“Going into these negotiations our goal was to improve our benefits package, add more time off to deal with illnesses or personal issues without using vacation time, and make the rules more fair for our members,” declared steward and bargaining committee member Tyra Eaglefeathers. “While we certainly did not get everything we wanted, this contract is light years ahead of what we had. We still have more work to do.”

Several months prior to the negotiation process, Valley Metro, the City Authority that contracts with ACI for light rail services offered to increase wages over and above the rates bargained for in the last contract. Their intention was to make the filling of vacancies easier and attract more applicants. At the same time the Authority under new leadership sought to make one job title a higher paying position in the bargaining unit as is often the case in other cities across the country. Previously all four of the job titles in the unit were paid the same rate. The decision to create the gap between the jobs faced opposition from members in the unit. The bargaining committee made a variety of proposals to either eliminate or at least reduce the gap. The employer consistently resisted citing the concerns of Valley Metro. All employees received the additional wage increase, and the one title received a larger one which created the gap.

After several communications and more than one ratification the contract offer passed. These employees will all receive full retroactive wage increases back to July 1, 2023, as well as all the new and improved benefits and language in the Agreement.

“This was a difficult negotiation, one made far more so because of the change in wage rates,” said Committee member Jerrisa Moore. “This was a good contract offer and would have passed much more easily but for this change.”

There are still more issues to work through for this group and those discussions will continue in the Labor Management Committee meetings. The sides will take up 10-hour shifts, training, and other issues as well.

“At the end of the day all of our members will receive more paid time off, more money for Insurance premiums, increases in short term disability, more life insurance, more money for uniforms, better overtime language, and many more improvements including six months of back pay,” reported Bargaining Committee member Rodrick Evans. “All of what we did are improvements and not one takeaway. We are all better off than before for sure”.