

Unions

OPEIU Convention Delegates Approve Two New Benefits for Entire Membership

Each member of the Office and Professional Employees International Union will receive two new benefits—life insurance and accidental death and dismemberment—as the result of action taken at the union’s convention earlier this month.

Upon the recommendation of the executive board, delegates to the union’s triennial convention held June 3-6 in San Diego, approved providing each of the union’s 105,000 members with \$2,000 life insurance and \$2,000 AD&D.

OPEIU spokeswoman Nicole Korkolis told BNA June 18 that these benefits are provided by the union and paid for out of the general fund. “It’s a benefit of OPEIU membership,” she added.

OPEIU members already receive a free towing benefit that was approved at the previous convention in 2010. That benefit provides for two free tows or service calls per year, up to \$100 per call, Korkolis said. “This is a huge benefit for our members, when you consider the cost of AAA [American Automobile Association],” she said.

According to Korkolis, “this is how we are different from many unions, in that we provide these benefits free of charge to the members. It’s a great organizing tool as well.”

Increase for Strike Benefit/Finance Fund. In other action at the convention, delegates approved an increase in the amount local unions contribute to the strike benefit and finance fund.

According to Korkolis, the union paid out \$2.5 million in strike benefits to taxi drivers during an eight-week strike at Yellow Checker Star Transportation in Las Vegas (85 DLR A-8, 5/2/13). In order to shore up the fund, the amount local unions contribute to the strike fund will increase from the current \$1.75 per member per month to \$2.00 effective Oct. 1, to \$2.15 on Oct. 1, 2014, and to \$2.25 on Oct. 1, 2015, Korkolis told BNA June 19.

These increases will generate \$2.5 million this year, \$2.7 million effective in 2014, and \$2.8 million in 2015, with contributions to the strike fund totalling \$8 million over the three years.

In addition to shoring up the fund, delegates voted to increase strike benefits from \$275 per week to \$290 per week after a seven-day waiting period.

In other action, delegates elected Michael Goodwin to his seventh term as president of the union, and Mary Mahoney to her second term as secretary-treasurer.

OPEIU represents workers in a wide range of industries including banking, insurance, higher education, shipping, hospitals, medical clinics, utilities, transportation, hotels, and administrative offices. In addition, professional organizations and guilds affiliated with OPEIU include nurses, podiatrists, insurance agents, appraisers, clinical social workers, Minor League Baseball umpires, teachers, and helicopter pilots.

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