



DENVER SHERIFF DEPARTMENT LODGE 27

FRATERNAL ORDER OF POLICE

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Contract Negotiations Begin in October

Brothers & Sisters,

As each of you should be aware we will begin contract negotiations in October for the 2013 labor contract. Collective bargaining is the process of law enforcement officers, as a collective group, securing terms and conditions of employment through negotiation of a binding contract defining those terms and conditions of employment for both the Deputies and the City and County of Denver.

These are difficult times for contract negotiations. The mood of the public, and the psychology of the current recession, greatly impacts the political will of both the union and the city to reach mutually agreeable terms based on the city's actual ability to pay. It is no secret that cities have always been willing to use economic crisis as a club against labor. The past four years have been no exception, and cities and counties know they have the public on their side. This year will be no different.

As a result in each contract cycle since 2009 we find ourselves entering negotiations with two primary goals. First to maintain current levels of pay and benefits avoiding layoffs and furloughs while improving on non-monetary parts of the contract. Second is to secure whatever increases in wages and benefits that we can reasonably expect to achieve. To do so takes skillful negotiations and reasonable compromise.

The Fraternal Order of Police is the sole and exclusive bargaining agent for the Deputies of the Denver Sheriff's Department. We negotiate terms and conditions of employment for the bargaining unit, which is all members sworn by the Manager of Safety in the Sheriff's Department of the City and County of Denver, except the Undersheriff, Division Chiefs, and Majors. Normally labor contracts are for either two or three years. The length of this contract will be dependent on the terms of the total agreement. Although we negotiate for all Denver Deputies below the rank of Major, we will only allow members in good standing of the Denver Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 27 to vote in the ratification of the final contract.

The City Charter gives us the right to negotiate wages and rates of pay; overtime pay; call back pay; shift differential; acting pay; vacation leave; holidays; sick leave; bereavement leave; jury duty leave; leave for union activity; other paid or unpaid leave; payments for injuries, sickness, or death arising from the line of duty; health insurance; life insurance; allowances for uniform and equipment and the maintenance of uniforms and equipment; overtime pay; call back pay; shift differential; acting pay; payments for unused leave at separation; longevity pay; tuition refund; dependent's benefits; and any other financial or economic benefits to individual Deputy Sheriffs.

We are in the process of finalizing our proposals for this year's contract negotiation. We had a good response to the online survey of Deputies establishing their priorities for negotiations of this contract. The majority of proposals that we will be bringing to the table are from that survey. The negotiating team for this contract cycle is made up of several deputies who have expansive knowledge in negotiating labor contracts. The team also includes our Labor Council attorney and the Executive Director of the Labor Council. This is a highly experienced and seasoned negotiating team, whose labor background is exclusive and extensive in negotiating law enforcement labor contracts.

As many of you are well aware the success of negotiations involving monetary issues are based on the city's ability to pay and how your salary and benefits compare to other similar agencies. As such it is imperative we have a complete picture of the financial status of the city and where we fall in comparable agencies. The Labor Council has contracted with Ron York of Policepay.net to provide both a financial analysis of the City and County of Denver and a detailed comparable study of how the Denver Sheriff's Department compares to other similar agencies in wages and benefits. Ron York has been providing his financial services for law enforcement labor for over forty years. We have used him in the past and he is considered the best in his field.

It is the goal of your negotiating team to secure the best possible contract attainable. Our goal is to do so without reaching impasse. If we reach impasse on issues which we believe are within the means of the City to provide, we will not hesitate to bring those matters to arbitration. Once the contract has been tentatively agreed to we will be submitting it to the FOP membership for a vote. Ultimately the members of Denver Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 27 will decide to accept or reject the contract.

Michael J Violette



Executive Director
Colorado State Lodge
Fraternal Order of Police