

**Dennis A. Shaw**

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**From:** Ellen Anreder <bleicommla@aol.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 15, 2011 12:25 PM  
**To:** Labor Union News  
**Subject:** Just posted to Supermarket News' web site

The following story was just posted on *Supermarket News'* web site:

## **UFCW Contract Vote This Week**

Aug 15, 2011 12:00 PM,  
By ELLIOT ZWIEBACH, Supermarket News

LOS ANGELES — Members of seven Southern California locals of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union are set to vote this Friday, Aug. 19, on whatever contract offer is on the table on Wednesday, the last day on which negotiations are scheduled.

The employers did not respond last week to the union's plans to take a vote. However, they issued a press release a day later outlining a new health care proposal “[that] should help the parties move closer to reaching an agreement.”

The existing contracts — covering 62,000 clerks and meat cutters at Supervalu-owned Albertsons, Kroger-owned Ralphs and Safeway-owned Vons — expired on March 6, and union members authorized negotiators in April to call a strike.

Both sides indicated the key area of disagreement involves funding of the health care plan over the term of the new contract.

Under the employer proposal offered last week, while union members would increase their weekly contributions to the health plan, the employers said they would increase their contributions to the health care fund during the life of the contract to ensure that employees will be able to maintain the most important benefits of the current medical plan.

The employer proposal would require no changes in prescription drug co-pays; no changes in the PPO plan's total annual deductibles; and no changes in the plan's out-of-pocket maximums.

In addition, the proposal would continue making an HMO option available; continue to pay 100% of the cost of most preventative care procedures; maintain the co-pays for maintenance drug medications; and make benefits available to employees who work at least 16 hours a week.

A UFCW spokesman said the two sides have also begun discussing wages — a topic usually left for last, after all other matters have been decided.

He declined to indicate last week what might happen if members reject the contract proposal later this week. In previous years, the two sides have often returned to the bargaining table after a contract was voted down.

During the last round of negotiations four years ago, the union ratified a contract at this point in bargaining talks, the UFCW spokesman said, “though at that time we had already completed a contract with Stater Bros. that set a pattern for the rest of the industry.”

The last time the major Southern California chains and the UFCW could not come to a timely agreement, in 2003-2004, a 141-day strike-lockout ensued.

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