



TEAMSTERS LOCAL 727

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

**Spring 2026
Edition**

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Executive Board Biographies 2

Parking Members Receive Raise 3

Brookfield Zoo 4-5

Local 727 Reaches Deal with Primo Brands 6

Member Spotlight 10

Honoring Zeberdee Barnes & Patrice Jefferson 13

John Coli, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer ■ TeamstersLocal727.org ■ 1300 W. Higgins Rd, Suite 111 ■ Park Ridge, IL 60068



Local 727 Executive Board

ELECTED TO NEW TERM

On Sunday, November 2, 2025, the Executive Board of Teamsters Local 727 was elected to a new three-year term which began on January 1, 2026, by an enthusiastic gathering of Local 727 membership. The Unity Slate, under the leadership of Secretary-Treasurer John Coli, Jr., ran without opposition and won re-election by acclamation.

"I want to welcome our new Board members Bobby and Carolyn, and congratulate Caleen on her new position," said Coli. "And I'm proud to announce that Caleen is the Local's first female President. Everyone on the Board is dedicated to go the distance for membership and have long track records to show it. As always, I am humbled by the unity of our membership and grateful for their continued trust and support."

Executive Board Member Biographies:

John Coli, Jr., Secretary-Treasurer

John Coli Jr. has been a member of Local 727 since 2000. John earned undergraduate and law degrees from Columbia University, where he received interdepartmental honors for an undergraduate thesis on the Teamsters. John also serves members as the Chairman for Local 727's Health and Welfare Fund, Pension Fund, and Legal and Educational Assistance Fund as well as the Soft Drink Industry Pension and Teamsters Local 727 Tradeshow 401k.

John became President of the Local on January 1, 2011 after spending nearly two years as Vice President. He became Secretary-Treasurer on July 13, 2017. He was elected President of the Chicago Entertainment Industry Labor Council and named a Vice President of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Newspaper Conference in 2013. John was elected as a trustee on the Teamsters Joint Council 25 Executive Board in 2024 and is a member of Local 727's Parking Industry Labor Management Committee and the Illinois AFL-CIO Executive Board. John is also a member of the Illinois Bar Association.

Caleen Carter-Patton, President/Business Manager

Caleen Carter-Patton earned a bachelor's degree in Industrial and Labor Relations from Cornell University. After college, the Bethany, Missouri native completed an internship with Chicago Jobs with Justice, and then went on to do political work for the Chicago Teachers' Union. Before joining Teamsters Local 727 in March 2014, she was a lead organizer for the Fight for 15 campaign, which was largely the reason the minimum wage increased in Chicago. For many years, Caleen was a business agent representing mostly the soda and parking industry. She has served as the Recording Secretary of Teamsters Local 727 and is now the first female President in the history of the Local's executive board. Caleen is also the Union's Business Manager and negotiates many of the Local's largest contracts, including Reyes Coca Cola, Pepsi and Keurig Dr Pepper. When she's not fighting for working people, Caleen is wrangling her sons—Harry, 3 and Auggie, 5.

Darryl Poelinitz, Vice President

2026 marks Darryl Poelinitz's fortieth year as a Local 727 member, starting with Standard Parking in 1986. Darryl eventually ran several valet operations downtown, including Chicago staples Ditka's and Ed Debevic's. In 1997, he became a Hiker at 1550 N Lakeshore Drive where he's been ever since.

When asked about his time in Local 727 Darryl replied, "I'm most proud of the experiences I've had and the big changes 727 has made in my life." Before joining Local 727, Darryl was a Maintenance Manager at a non-Union building where they didn't offer health insurance or retirement benefits at all. "It's good to be Union because you don't have to deal with management like you would without a Union, says Darryl. "With a Union, they got a contract and protocol to follow. They can't just do whatever they want like they'd like to."

Robert Laino, Recording Secretary

Robert ("Bobby") Laino holds a Bachelor's Degree in Accounting from Dominican University and has earned the Certified Employee Benefit Specialist (CEBS) designation through the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania. He has been a member of the Teamsters since 2010, and began serving as Recording Secretary of the Local Union on January 1, 2026.

Bobby currently serves as Fund Manager for the Teamsters Local 727 Benefit Funds, a role he has held since July 2021, following nearly five years as Assistant Fund Manager. Earlier in his career, he worked as Controller for Teamsters Joint Council 25 and as an Auditor with Bansley & Kiener, LLP.

Tony Wendel, Trustee

Tony Wendel has been a dedicated Union Trustee serving on the Executive Board since 2017. Born and raised in the Chicago North Ave. & Pulaski neighborhood, he has over forty years of union experience, including being a Steward for the Chicago Tribune and Trustee with Teamsters Local 706.

Tony currently works in Local 727's Film and Television Industry as a driver for the Chicago Fire TV series. A passionate sports enthusiast, he values the time he spends working closely with his extended union family. Tony has been happily married for over thirty years and is a proud father to one son.

Jose Delgado, Trustee

Jose Delgado is a dedicated Commission Picker at Keurig Dr. Pepper who has been a Teamster for twenty years and a member of Local 727's Executive Board for ten. Jose also serves as a shop steward at KDP where he makes time every day to ensure that the contract we all fought so hard for is being upheld.

Jose became a Trustee not long after attending a protest of the soda tax where he "put my nose where it doesn't belong" in to fight for Industry jobs that were on the line. With over 1000 people in attendance, he gave a speech on behalf of his brothers and sisters at KDP. Jose remarked that when he started at KDP "we had only one personal day and one unpaid sick day, now I have vacation time, sick days, floating holidays. It's amazing what we can do when we work together."

Jose sees firsthand how leadership at 727 works hard on behalf of membership. He's proud to work with people he trusts and wants to remind membership "No matter what, your Union will always have your back. You can't win everything in life, but you never have to fight alone."

Carolyn German, Executive Board Trustee

Carolyn German has been a proud Parking Industry Local 727 member since December 11, 1997 when she started as a Hiker for General Parking. Carolyn currently works as a Cashier at the Provident Hospital garage with Impark and joined the Local 727 Executive Board in late 2025.

Carolyn considers her role as Trustee to be one of her greatest achievements, and she does not take this responsibility lightly, understanding that she has been entrusted to perform a duty with the highest integrity in solidarity with all Local 727 members.

Carolyn is a mother, grandmother, and recently became a great-grandmother. In 2019, she founded a non-profit community-based organization called "Level Up Ur X-Cuses," and was Recording Secretary for the Teamster Black Caucus for three years. Carolyn also has several hobbies including being a cobbler and a gospel music producer. "I am who I am," says Carolyn. "A proud member of Local 727!"

Funeral Directors Services Association Members Ratify **New Five- Year Contract**

The FDSA Local 727 Bargaining Committee is proud to announce that the bargaining unit overwhelmingly approved a new five-year agreement on July 30, 2025. The contract delivers a 15% overall wage increase over the life of the agreement and continuation of strong Local 727 benefits.

Additional contract highlights include:

- ✓ Annual increases to the minimum wage for Trade Embalmers
- ✓ An increase to on-call pay for directors
- ✓ An increase to the removal rate to \$375 per engagement
- ✓ Strengthened contract language for lunch breaks and PTO

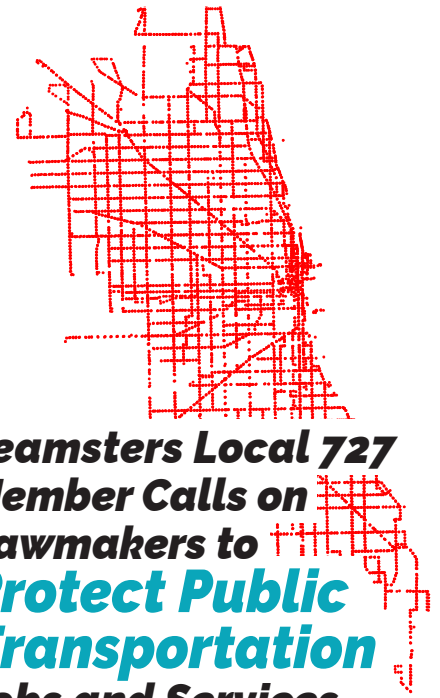
The Union appreciates the hard work of the Union Bargaining Committee which included Eileen Baldeshwiler, Dennis Ehlers, Joseph Lyne and John Leadroot.



Local 727 welcomes new Vitalant Steward **Beverly Webb**

Local 727 would like to announce the new Vitalant union steward, Beverly Webb. Beverly is a hardworking Rosemont-based Teamster who has worked in transportation for the past thirty years. Beverly has worked at Vitalant since 2010 and previously drove a school bus for eighteen years in Barrington School District #220.

Beverly is a proud mother and grandmother of three beautiful grandkids who she enjoys taking on rides on her jacked-up golfcart through her community where they go fishing on the Fox River. Beverly also enjoys traveling and her favorite destinations include Myrtle Beach, Hawaii, and skiing at Lake Tahoe. She also enjoys instrumental music and The Chill on XM radio. Her favorite foods are Mexican and Italian and Beverly loves to cook—a few of her favorite dishes are chicken caesar salad and Italian sausage with pasta.



Teamsters Local 727 Member Calls on Lawmakers to **Protect Public Transportation Jobs and Services**

Teamsters Local 727 Union Steward and CDT/WeDriveU Pace employee Darrell Brewer addressed the Regional Transit Authority (RTA) Board earlier this month and delivered a powerful message on behalf of working people; public transit is essential to the lifeblood of Chicago and Illinois. Speaking for thousands of union members and riders who rely on CTA, Metra, and Pace every day, he emphasized that maintaining strong, reliable, and safe transit isn't just about getting people to work—it's about protecting jobs, communities, and economic opportunity across our state.

Illinois transit agencies face a fiscal cliff that could bring devastating service cuts, mass layoffs, and eliminated routes if state lawmakers fail to act. The Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), Metra, Pace, and RTA collectively face a multi-million-dollar budget shortfall that demands immediate attention. Without dedicated revenue and structural reforms, the future of public transportation in Illinois continues to hang in the balance.

Since last year, Teamsters Local 727 has been a prominent participant in the Labor Alliance for Public Transportation (LAPT), a coalition of over 30 labor unions working together to address the public transit fiscal cliff.

Parking Members Receive **\$1.25 CONTRACTUAL RAISE**

On November 1, 2025, all Parking Industry members employed at a Commercial or Residential location who fall under the Master Parking Agreement received a \$1.25 per hour contractually guaranteed increase to their current wage rate.



"As we enter the final year of the current contract, I want to thank our Parking Industry Brothers and Sisters for their continued solidarity and support," said John Coli, Jr. "We look forward to contract negotiations in the coming year."

Brookfield Zoo Chicago Uses Outside Non-Union Contractor, Prompting Local 727 to Take Action

During 2025, Brookfield Zoo Chicago management relied extensively on non-union outside contractors to perform bargaining unit work traditionally performed by Local 727 Grounds Department unit employees. Routine tasks such as weed whipping, edging grass, trimming hedges, mulching, and fertilizing have been outsourced to contractors, leaving union members confused, frustrated, and concerned about job security. In response, the Union filed three separate grievances, each accompanied by formal requests for information and demands to bargain as well as unfair labor practice charges.

Adding insult to injury, late last year the Zoo sent an email to all employees claiming financial hardship due to "revenue shortfalls" and announcing a reduction of operational

expenses, deferment of major equipment purchases, and a six-month hiring freeze. Yet, despite these so-called austerity measures, management continued to rely on the outside contractors, undermining both their own stated goals and the work of dedicated union members at the Zoo.

In early 2026, the parties met regarding the Zoo's proposal to outsource landscaping work where representatives of the Zoo admitted that it would *undoubtedly* be more expensive for the Zoo to use subcontractors but refused to provide the actual amount it intends to spend and where the Zoo is offsetting it. Instead, the Zoo shockingly admitted that the expense was not considered by the Zoo and blamed the current groundskeepers for not working to the level the Zoo apparently desires.

This absurd proposal by the Zoo once again showed their continued lack of credibility. At a time when almost every department at the Zoo, including animal care programs, has reported being short-staffed and overworked—raising genuine concerns about the health and safety of both workers and animals - spending money on contractors over investing in bargaining unit safety and animal welfare is illogical. The decision to outsource amidst staffing shortages sug-

"THE ZOO CAN'T CLAIM TO BE BROKE WHILE IT FUNNELS RESOURCES TO CONTRACTORS TO PERFORM UNION WORK."

gested only a calculated move to attempt to weaken Union strength right before contract negotiations were set to begin.

In light of all the Union raised about the Zoo's clear violations, the Zoo stated that *it would not move ahead with its plan to subcontract out landscaping work.*

"Actions speak louder than words," said John Coli Jr. "The Zoo can't claim to be broke while it funnels resources to contractors to perform union work. Similarly, placing the blame on these hardworking members is nothing short of shameful. This is not just a financial issue, it's a matter of respect, accountability, and adherence to the union contract. Instead of wasting resources on unnecessary contractors, management should focus on investing in and bolstering its dedicated union workforce."

After Hard Work from Industry Unions, Illinois Strengthens Film Tax Incentives in Newly Passed Legislation

On December 12, 2025 Governor JB Pritzker signed SB1911, a comprehensive improvement to the existing Illinois Film Production Services Tax Credit Act, into law. SB 1911 was passed by the Illinois Legislature with strong bipartisan support last fall and includes the most significant improvements to the tax credit in over a decade. The newly passed legislation was designed to reduce production costs—imperative to attracting film and television productions to come to Illinois—while strengthening local hiring. Additionally, with a new sunset date of December 31, 2039, the incentive gives studios and filmmakers a more predictable future with the long-term stability needed for multi-season planning and infrastructure development.

Passing this bill would not have been possible without the collaboration of the Chicagoland film community—including, but not limited to, industry labor unions such as IATSE, SAG-AFTRA, and Teamsters Local 727. Representatives from each Union along with representatives from Illinois Production Alliance and executives from Chicago area studios met multiple times over the past few years with the shared goal of creating a strongly competitive tax credit developed with industry growth in mind.

With SB 1911 now law, Illinois entered 2026 with one of the strongest production incentive packages in the country.

Film & Television Productions 2025-26

- Chicago PD
- The Bear
- Deli Boys
- The Chi
- Neagley
- Moses the Black
- Enemies
- Dtf/St Louis
- Double Blind
- Barbershop
- Trash Mountain
- Tis So Sweet
- Saturn Return
- Cheesesteak
- Dark Matter
- American Blue
- The Land



WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE ANIMALS?

After the current contract expires, Brookfield Zoo members should expect that Zoo management will try to talk to them about negotiations and a potential unfair labor practice (ULP) strike. In the past, the weapon they have always used is ‘what will happen to the animals?’ First, for the practical, let’s answer that question: Since the CBA will be expired, the provisions applicable to this will no longer apply. However, the Union is and has always been dedicated to the safety and welfare of the animals.

The previous agreement provides that management will inform the Union of the minimum number of employees needed to maintain the health and safety of the animals. The Union will work with bargaining unit leads in each work group to assess the reasonableness of management’s request. Leads would then assign members in a rotation to ensure that the animals are provided for.

However, that is a question for management: what will happen to the animals? Not only does the Brookfield Zoo have control if there is a work stoppage or not by coming to the table to bargain in good faith for a fair and equitable contract that their hard-working Teamsters deserve, but many members are currently reporting a staffing shortage that is unsafe for members and animals alike. As it is among the top demands of the membership, the Union has made a proposal concerning staffing. The Zoo has rejected the proposal and has remained wholly uninterested in having any sort of conversation about staffing.



“Please do not let Zoo management use your value system and character against you,” said John Coli, Jr. “They want to make you feel guilty so you won’t act in your own best interest. The Zoo doesn’t think about the animals when they try to hire subcontractors for half a million dollars a year while simultaneously saying there is a hiring freeze. For too many years, Teamsters at the Zoo have made far less than their peers in other industries because of their love for the Zoo and the animals there. Instead of exploiting that, Zoo management should realize that if members are finally fed up, it’s time to do the

IN THE CHANCE OF A STRIKE, TEAMSTERS LOCAL 727 MEMBERS WOULD ENSURE THE SAFETY AND WELL-BEING OF THE ANIMALS AT THE BROOKFIELD ZOO, AS THEY ALWAYS HAVE.

right thing. The Zoo needs to come to the table and bargain in good faith to reach an agreement that honors, respects, and awards their workers. When management asks about the animals, turn that question around on them.”

IBT Approves Enhanced Strike Benefits for Zoo Members

Local 727 is pleased to announce that the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) has approved the Union’s request for enhanced strike benefits for all Chicago Zoological Society (CZS) members in the event of a strike. These enhanced benefits increase the standard strike benefit amount

under the IBT Constitution to \$1,000 per week.

As of the date of this notice, 12 unfair labor practice charges are filed and pending with NLRB Region 13 against CZS.

“On behalf of all of us at Local 727 and all of our members at CSZ, I

would like to express my utmost gratitude to the leadership at the IBT for making these benefits available to our members,” said John Coli, Jr. “Out-of-work benefits of \$25 an hour means that our members can stay on the picket line without worrying about their mortgage or rent. The General

President and Executive Board have ensured that members retain strength and dignity on the picket line in their fight for fairness. While we are always hopeful a deal can be reached, the Zoo’s initial proposals coupled with its failure to resolve the other arbitration in order to clear a path for further negotiations signals otherwise,” added Coli.



"This fall, we opened our second Wellness Clinic in Oak Lawn. Our Berwyn clinic was so successful and at capacity that we had no choice but to open a second. And we're already planning a third one. Having the clinics allows us to better the quality of life for more members and their families. As most of you know, all care and prescriptions from the Clinics are completely free to eligible members. Affordable, accessible, good healthcare is a part of our legacy that matters the most to me. I really am incredibly proud of the work we've done at 727 to better the health and quality of life of our membership." —John Coli, Jr.

Local 727 Celebrates Opening of Second Wellness Center in Oak Lawn

On October 26th, Local 727 celebrated the grand opening of the second Teamsters Local 727 Wellness Center located at 6309 West 95th Street in Oak Lawn, IL. In partnership with Marathon Health, the Wellness Center in Oak Lawn mirrors the staff and providers at the Berwyn location by providing primary care services such as annual physical exams, DOT physicals, mental health services, school and sports physicals, sick and urgent care, and select onsite medications at no cost to Local 727 Health & Welfare Fund participants. New to the Oak Lawn location is the addition of a dedicated dietician to expand the overall wellness services.

During the opening celebration, a motion was made to dedicate the Oak Lawn clinic in

memory of late members Zeberdee Barnes and Julius Poelinitz. Members in attendance at the opening unanimously approved the motion and a commemorative plaque will be posted at the clinic at a later date.

"This is another proud day for all of us at Local 727 made even more special by dedicating the clinic in honor of Zeb and Julius," said John Coli, Jr. "Both men exemplified what it means to be a Teamster and helped shape what Local 727 stands for as an organization today through their years of service, strength, and solidarity. We continue their legacies by providing the highest level of health care to our members and their families in both Berwyn and Oak Lawn."



Local 727 Participates in 19th Annual **FDSA TradeShow**

On November 5, 2025 Local 727 participated in the 19th annual FDSA Trade Show at the White Eagle in Niles, IL. This is the last year the trade show will be hosted at the White Eagle—FDSA will announce the 2026 location soon.

Funeral Business Representatives Alex and Nick were on hand to meet and greet everyone that participated in the event this year. In addition, Local 727 Benefit Funds Field Representative Ben Affetto was present to answer and discuss any benefit fund questions.

It was great seeing all the current and retired 727 Funeral Director Embalmers members that stopped by the booth to ask questions or talk about the current industry news. In addition, FDSA, Alderwoods, and SCI contracts were made available to all members that stopped by.

Local 727 Reaches Deal with Primo Brands on Route Realignment

On March 10th, Local 727 met with legal representatives from Primo Brands (the parent company of DS Services of America Inc. d/b/a Hinckley Springs) to bargain over the changes in duties related to the March 23, 2026 route realignment which will result from the merged Company integrating Blue Triton customers with Primo Brands customers on March 23, 2026. Days later, membership voted overwhelmingly in favor of the Agreement.

The Agreement includes:

- ✓ Increasing the Primo commissions to \$4.50 per 5-gallon in exchange for RSR's handling increased merchandising duties.
- ✓ Adding a \$13 cooler cleaning fee for RSR's whose customers request it.
- ✓ All RSR's being eligible to bid, including those that have a Drive Cam write-up, or those currently on Workers Comp/Short-term disability.
- ✓ RSR's will maintain the route/territory structure. Any product that needs to be delivered will be handled by the assigned RSR.
- ✓ The five RSR's who previously handled Sam's Club will receive eight months of additional compensation.

In addition, the Company will continue to offer extra work on Saturdays for RSR's who want to work and reach the weekend incentive.

Thank you to the RSR's that participated on the Union's Committee: Tim Flynn, Andrew Canady, Lou Monaco, and Tim Gallagher.



Local 727 Welcomes SP+ O'Hare Parking Steward **Harriet Dade**

Local 727 would like to announce the new SP+ O'Hare Parking union steward, Harriet Dade. Harriet is a longtime member of Local 727 who began her career in the parking industry in 1994. The majority of those thirty plus years have been spent working for SP+. Harriet started working at a downtown location and then worked at multiple other city locations before being assigned to O'Hare.

In her spare time Harriet is a huge movie buff and also enjoys taking daily walks. Harriet is also a regular attendee of the monthly Union membership meetings and is much loved by the Local 727 staff and her Union Brothers and Sisters.



MASSIVE VICTORY for WeDriveU Chicago Members

Photo Source: Shutterstock

In early 2026, Teamsters Local 727 proudly announced winning a landmark settlement covering unpaid and owed vacation and longevity wage increases after fighting WeDriveYou for nearly one year.

Under the settlement, it was agreed that bargaining unit employees will receive both a contract increase on every November 1st and an additional anniversary/longevity increase on each employee's anniversary until the employee reaches the top of the wage scale. Additionally,

the Company was required to backpay eligible employees for all contract and longevity wage increases that were missed since November 1, 2024. Members who were active (non-terminated) as of December 22, 2025, and did not receive both annual contract increases and anniversary/longevity increases each year were eligible to be backpaid and made whole for the increases that WeDriveU failed to provide.

Also under the settlement, employees who were denied a first, second, third, or fourth

This settlement puts almost a half million dollars into the pockets of our hard-working members.

week of vacation in 2025 were paid out for the additional vacation they were not provided in 2025. Backpay for the missing vacation hours was paid at the higher adjusted wage rate to include any missed anniversary and contract increases as described above.

Finally, effective January 1, 2026 and going forward, all vacation allotments will go back to being frontloaded each January 1st, based on seniority. Members eligible for an additional week of vacation were allowed to bid on their additional week which would be awarded in seniority order with all submitted requests.

"This settlement agreement was hard fought and comes after a yearlong fight by the Union to hold WeDriveU accountable," said John Coli, Jr. "We simply would not take no for an answer and we do not tire. This settlement puts almost a half million dollars into the pockets of our hard-working members. It's a testament to what we can accomplish when we stand together, and it's a much-deserved win for our membership."

An additional grievance filed on behalf of all members was resolved prior to the above settlement regarding hours worked on November 8 and 9, 2024, when the Company issued separate checks resulting in hours not counting towards overtime pay. Despite several grievance meetings, the Company maintained its stance and the Union moved the issue to arbitration. After some pushback, the Company finally came to their senses and agreed to settle the grievance by paying all eligible bargaining unit members lost overtime pay for eligible hours worked during those days.

"We have noticed a huge shift in the relationship between the Union and Company since it switched over to WeDriveU," said John Coli Jr., Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 727. "If they think they can take from our members without a fight, they're dead wrong."

727 Funeral Director Embalmers Participate in Fall CE Seminar

Teamsters Local 727 hosted its second Funeral CE Seminar of the year on November 19, 2025 via Zoom.

The Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation (IDFPR) continues to emphasize the importance of ongoing education for licensed Funeral Directors and Embalmers. CE requirements play a critical role in ensuring that professionals remain current with evolving regulations and best practices within the funeral industry. Local 727's commitment to providing accessible and high-quality CE opportunities supports members in maintaining compliance with IDFPR standards.

Nearly one hundred members participated in our second CE seminar of the year, with the opportunity to earn up to five CE hours. "This has been a great year for the funeral industry members of Local 727," said John Coli, Jr. "With the ratification of the new contracts and the high level of engagement in our CE seminars, we closed out the year on a strong note."

The program on November 19th included the following courses:

- ✓ **MERSA**
Gale Keefe
- ✓ **Cardiac Pathophysiology**
Gale Keefe
- ✓ **Local 727 Legal Benefit**
Joe Coli-CTM Legal Group
- ✓ **Immigration**
Irene Rizzolatti-CTM Legal Group

SCR Batavia Members

RATIFY NEW 3-YEAR CONTRACT

On July 31, 2025 Teamsters Local 727 members at SCR Medical Transportation, LLC, led by 727 Business Manager Caleen Carter-Patton, General Counsel Jayna Brown, Business Agents David Glass, Donaldo Leiva, Patrick Malone and Sean McGough, and the bargaining committee of four members reached a tentative agreement with the Company on a new three-year contract at SCR's Batavia location which was subsequently unanimously ratified by membership.

The agreement includes strong wage increases of 14% over the life of the contract, including an industry setting \$25 an hour starting wage rate and longevity increases for the hard-working Local 727 members who perform vital services paratransit service in the DuPage and Kane County communities. Contract improvements also include access to the Teamsters Local 727 Wellness Center, the addition of Juneteenth as a paid holiday, increasing the number of hours paid per day for 10-hour drivers, and a commitment to hold a labor management meeting no later than sixty days after ratification.

In addition, the Union's committee strengthened work/life balance for members by limiting the amount of time a drivers can be forced to work after their bidded end time.

Highlights of the New Agreement:

- ✓ 14% wage increase over three years
- ✓ \$25/hour starting wage
- ✓ Longevity pay increases
- ✓ Access to Teamsters Local 727 Wellness Center
- ✓ Juneteenth added as a paid holiday
- ✓ Increased paid hours for 10-hour drivers
- ✓ Limits on forced work past scheduled end times (better work/life balance)
- ✓ Required labor-management meeting within 60 days

The Union Bargaining Committee was spearheaded by member leaders Loretha Sapho, John Nestor, Leroy Litzhoff, and Tom Schmerold.

Vitalant Members Ratify New Three-Year Contract

On July 11th, Local 727 hosted an in-person contract ratification vote for Vitalant Distribution Drivers and Mobile Unit Assistants (MUAs) where the bargaining unit overwhelmingly ratified a new three-year contract. The agreement includes strong wage increases for the hard-working Local 727 members who perform vital services for the Company including ensuring that donated blood is transferred to and from the Rosemont Lab and is safely delivered to hospitals.

Contract improvements also include limiting the number of stairs an MUA is required to

carry up heavy company equipment at blood drives. If a blood drive has seven or more stairs, then no fewer than two MUAs shall be assigned to the drive.

In addition, the Union's committee strengthened contract language that requires the Company to approve PTO requests in writing within fourteen calendar days from when it was submitted.

The Union appreciates the work of the Union Bargaining Committee which included Distribution Driver Beverly Webb and MUA Manny Nevarrez.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Local 727 Members Make Award Winning Documentary "I'm Only Blind"



In 2025, "I'm Only Blind," directed by Local 727 Movie Division member Kamelya Alexan along with Local 727 members Tim Walczynski and Chris-Teena Conostas who worked in the film's Music and Cinematography Departments, won the Audience Choice Award for Best Documentary at the 25th Annual Beverly Hills International Film Festival.

"I'm Only Blind" follows the story of Tim Paul, a 66-year-old blind marathon runner and employee of The Chicago Lighthouse. Tim Paul has not only run twenty-four marathons but also skis, sails, swims, and finds time to play the flute and piano while working full-time and volunteering at his church.

Alexan found herself inspired by Tim Paul's story and his many accomplishments despite living with a disability. She felt that Tim's story could be an inspiration to others and a feel-good film for people during our current times that can sometimes feel overwhelming with despair or anxiety. "He doesn't give up," said Alexan, "how can the rest of us?"

"I'm Only Blind" is Alexan's first feature film but it certainly is not her last with her eyes set on making a film about space or aviation. Said Alexan, "find what makes you happy in the morning and go back to that."

Alexan plans to have more screenings of the film in Chicago in 2026 and eventually on a streaming service. Find out more information by visiting the film's website: alexanproductions.com.

Teamsters Local 727 and Batavia's SCR Medical Transportation Hold Labor-Management Meeting

Late last year, Teamsters Local 727 hosted the first labor-management meeting with SCR Medical Transportation's Batavia management team. Business Agent Sean McGough was joined by rank-and-file members John Nestor, Loretha Sapho, Leroy Litzhoff, and Tom Schmerold to discuss important worksite issues and the implementation of new language from the collective bargaining agreement ratified last summer.

Key topics covered during the meeting included: fairness in overtime assignments, time clock and wage concerns, breaks and lunches, and uniform provisions. A major highlight for all Drivers at the Batavia location was the Company's acknowledgment regarding break and lunch policies. Currently, Drivers are granted a 10-minute grace period following their last stop to begin their lunch break. As expressed by the rank-and-file members present, some Drivers find themselves in remote locations after their final drop before lunch. The Company acknowledged that in such cases Drivers should notify management if they cannot reach a suitable destination within the 10-minute window. Importantly, the Company agreed that Drivers will not be penalized or have time deducted if they notify management of delays beyond the grace period.

The meeting also reinforced the use of the 'Extra Work Board', which will be posted each Monday to provide Drivers with the opportunity to bid on additional work three weeks in advance. This system ensures seniority is respected and helps the Company cover shifts open as a result of call-offs and vacations.

Another important agenda item was uniforms. Some members expressed concerns about limited or ill-fitting uniforms. The Company committed to honoring reasonable requests for uniforms, emphasizing the importance of proper uniforms for bargaining unit members.

"The meeting reinforced the use of the 'Extra Work Board', which will be posted each Monday to provide Drivers with the opportunity to bid on additional work three weeks in advance."

IBT Sends Letter to Pepsi on Behalf of Local 727 Members Regarding Pepsi's Upcoming **MOVE TO GLENVIEW**



**Following the
Union's immediate
demand to
bargain over
Pepsi's attempted
unilateral change,
Pepsi agreed to
bargain with the
Union prior to
implementing any
changes**

On February 26th, representatives of PepsiCo reached out to Local 727 attempting to give notice of intent to "offload" the Blue Cloud Distribution program to established alcohol distributors, effectively discontinuing the program at the 35th Street and Elk Grove facilities. During this brief discussion, PepsiCo assured the Union that this decision was not based on a Chicagoland issue and instead was based on nationwide issues.

The Company had included this issue in its initial proposal to the Union during the February 22nd opening contract bargaining session but had no information to provide at that time. It appears PepsiCo clearly had more information than it claimed during bargaining as the

Company wasted no time and met directly with members, without permission from the Union, about its proposal to discontinue Blue Cloud.

Following the Union's immediate demand to bargain over Pepsi's attempted unilateral change, Pepsi agreed to bargain with the Union prior to implementing any changes and has reassured both the Union and the Bargaining Unit that all existing terms and conditions for the Blue Cloud employees will remain status quo until the parties have bargained to agreement. The Company also committed to the Union that all front-line managers will cease communicating anything to the contrary to Blue Cloud Distribution bargaining unit members.

Massive Victory for WeDriveU Chicago Members

In early 2026, Teamsters Local 727 proudly announced winning a landmark settlement covering unpaid and owed vacation and longevity wage increases after fighting WeDriveYou for nearly one year.

Under the settlement, it was agreed that bargaining unit employees will receive both a contract increase on every November 1st and an additional anniversary/longevity increase on each employee's anniversary until the employee reaches the top of the wage scale. Additionally, the Company was required to backpay eligible employees for all contract and longevity wage increases that were missed since November 1, 2024. Members who were active (non-terminated) as of December 22, 2025, and did not receive both annual contract increases and anniversary/longevity increases each year were eligible to

be backpaid and made whole for the increases that WeDriveU failed to provide.

Also under the settlement, employees who were denied a first, second, third, or fourth week of vacation in 2025 were paid out for the additional vacation they were not provided in 2025. Backpay for the missing vacation hours was paid at the higher adjusted wage rate to include any missed anniversary and contract increases as described above.

Finally, effective January 1, 2026 and going forward, all vacation allotments will go back to being frontloaded each January 1st, based on seniority. Members eligible for an additional week of vacation were allowed to bid on their additional week which would be awarded in seniority order with all submitted requests.

"This settlement agreement was hard fought and comes after a yearlong fight by the Union to hold WeDriveU accountable," said John Coli, Jr. "We simply would not take no for an answer and we do not tire. This settlement puts almost a half million dollars into the

pockets of our hard-working members. It's a testament to what we can accomplish when we stand together, and it's a much-deserved win for our membership."

An additional grievance filed on behalf of all members was resolved prior to the above settlement regarding hours worked on November 8 and 9, 2024, when the Company issued separate checks resulting in hours not counting towards overtime pay. Despite several grievance meetings, the Company maintained its stance and the Union moved the issue to arbitration. After some pushback, the Company finally came to their senses and agreed to settle the grievance by paying all eligible bargaining unit members lost overtime pay for eligible hours worked during those days.

"We have noticed a huge shift in the relationship between the Union and Company since it switched over to WeDriveU," said John Coli Jr., Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 727. "If they think they can take from our members without a fight, they're dead wrong."

KNOW YOUR WEINGARTEN RIGHTS

Weingarten Rights: What are they?

Weingarten Rights are legal protections for unionized employees established by a 1975 U.S. Supreme Court decision ensuring they have the right to union representation during investigatory interviews that could lead to discipline. These rights apply when an employee reasonably believes a meeting with management may result in discipline. If the employer denies the employee's reasonable request for union representation, then the employer may be in violation of the National Labor Relations Act.

Weingarten Rights: What do they mean?

Union members have the right to request and to have a union representative at any meeting that they believe could possibly lead to disciplinary action. If you are called

into a meeting and have reason to believe that disciplinary action may be issued as a result, you have the right to have a union representative or a fellow union member present during the meeting.

Weingarten Rights: How do I use them?

To invoke your Weingarten read this statement to management:

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated, or affect my personal working conditions, I request my union representative be present at the meeting. Without representation, I choose not to answer any questions and ask that the meeting be rescheduled."

If you are uncomfortable reading the statement to your employer you may download a digital version of your Weingarten rights to your cellphone and then present it to management.

Please know:

- The member must request a representative; the employer has no obligation to inform the employee of that right.
- Management does not have to call the union representative; the responsibility lies with the member to do so. Business cards for your assigned Business Agent are available at the Local 727 office and can be picked up for you to use at any time. Each business card includes a wallet sized version of your rights on the back that you can hand to management to assert your rights. Additionally, you can call the Local offices to speak to your Business Agent at 847-696-7500.
- Once a union representative is called, he or she has the right: (1) to know the subject of the investigatory meeting; (2) to confer with the member prior to the meeting; and (3) to speak during and participate in the meeting.

Teamsters Local 727 celebrates and honors the lives of Brother **Zeberdee Barnes** and Sister **Patrice Jefferson**



"Nothing is harder than losing a loved one, and our Union family lost two of our leaders this year. Zeberdee Barnes, affectionally known as Zeb, died on October 5th this year. He served in almost every role possible at Teamsters Local 727 and was a member for over four decades. Not only did he attend every convention, every TNBC conference, and almost every Union meeting, but Zeb was in large part to thank for organizing all of the parking industry in the Chicagoland area. Zeb really knew what it meant to walk the walk and he did it in style. He leaves behind a great legacy at Teamsters Local 727, and I know I speak for everyone in this room when I say that we are grateful for the work he did and for the friend he was.

We also lost another crucial member of our Teamsters family and Executive Board this year. On October 27th, we lost Patrice Jefferson. Patrice was a true friend to all working people and the greatest fighter against all injustices. She served on the Women's Committee and the Board of TNBC and never missed a meeting, conference, or opportunity to stand with working people. Patrice, just like Zeb, leaves behind a legacy at her workplace, our Executive Board, and in our hearts." —John T. Coli Jr.



“The jobs held by Local 727 members stretch far and wide and provide just about every kind of service one can imagine, but the throughline is the commitment and remarkable work ethic held by each of our members.”
 — John Coli, Jr.

Extreme Winter Weather Can't Hold Teamsters Local 727 Down

This was a tough winter, with more snow than we've had in years and temperatures in January plummeting to -30 with the wind-chill. While schools closed and many non-bargaining unit employees being allowed to work from home—including some management from Local 727 represented facilities - Local 727 Teamsters continued to report to work and kept our communities safe and our city running.

Every group represented by Local 727 continued to show up to work without exception. From those in the Soda, Paratransit, Movie, and Newspaper divisions out on the road making deliveries and keeping shelves fully stocked to the inside employees at Coca-Cola Reyes, KDP, Pepsi, Fleischmann, Hinckley, and Rollex working on docks and loading trucks, to Parking Industry workers at the Airports working outside in ground transportation—Local 727 members were there. Hikers and Valet Attendants across the city remained at the ready to assist residents and guests and provided easy access to hotels and condos. CVS and Osco Pharmacists showed up each day with their patients' health and wellbeing in mind, while Meter/Parking Enforcement, ATM

Installers, Quala Wash, Tradeshow, and Vitalant employees truly braved the cold each and every day. Local 727's Funeral Industry employees continued to provide families with care and comfort during their hardest times. And last but not least, workers at the Brookfield Zoo never failed to ensure that the animals in their care were safe, warm, and fed. Bottom line—Local 727 showed up.

“I'm extremely proud of our members for rising to the occasion and enduring this crazy weather,” said John Coli, Jr. “The jobs held by Local 727 members stretch far and wide and provide just about every kind of service one can imagine, but the throughline is the commitment and remarkable work ethic held by each of our members. Thank you—the city simply would not run without you.”

2026 Active Contract Negotiations

- 1 CHICAGO ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY
- 2 TRANSDEV
- 3 FLEISHMANN'S VINEGAR
- 4 HAWTHORNE RACECOURSE CORLISS OTB
- 5 PRESSURE WASHING UNLIMITED

2026 Upcoming Contract Negotiations

- 1 LOEWS CHICAGO O'HARE
- 2 NATIONAL EXPRESS SHUTTLE (WEDRIVEU)
- 3 QUALA WASH
- 4 SCI
- 5 MASTER PARKING AGREEMENT (COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL)
- 6 U.S.M.M.
- 7 OWL
- 8 O'HARE SHUTTLE
- 9 HAMPTON INN CHICAGO O'HARE
- 10 BALLY'S CHICAGO
- 11 CROWNE PLAZA
- 12 HAWTHORNE RACE COURSE
- 13 HILTON O'HARE & MAG MILE

Nothing in this article should be read as the union's waiver of any legal argument, position or grievance(s), or as a waiver of any rights, arguments, or defenses under any contract, collective bargaining agreement, or applicable law. The union does not forfeit its right to make any and all supplemental arguments.

Local 727 Welcomes New Home Juice Steward **Rashad McGee**

Local 727 would like to announce the new Home Juice union steward,

Rashad McGee. Rashad is a hardworking Chicagoland Teamster who has over five years on the job at Home Juice in Melrose Park. He works on the dock as forklift driver, picking and loading product. Rashad enjoys watching all types of sports, including

the Bears, Bulls, and White Sox (anything except the Cubs). He also enjoys relaxing while not working and occasionally watching comedians perform live.

Effective November 5, 2025, Daryl Thomas stepped down from his stewardship duties



to make way for the next generation of Home Juice bargaining unit employees to take leadership roles in the bargaining unit.

Local 727 thanks Darryl for his years of service as steward and for his participation on the Union's bargaining committee where he always fought hard for better wages and benefits for his co-workers.

In addition, Local 727 thanks Driver Ernesto Diaz and Forklift Driver Christian Espinoza for participating in the advisory steward vote. Both will assist fellow bargaining unit members with resolving issues if Rashad is off work.

Labor Board Finds Merit with Union's **Unfair Labor Charge** Against Quala Wash

Teamsters Local 727 took action after Quala Wash, LLC, in a clear violation of federal law, unlawfully delayed providing relevant information to the Union in connection to an ongoing grievance regarding the unjust termination of a bargaining unit member.

The dispute began in the fall of 2024 when the Union first requested information regarding the member's termination and the Company failed to provide all of the requested information. Despite multiple reminders from the Union about the outstanding information, the Company sat on the request for nearly five months, offering very little communication. It wasn't until the spring of 2025 that Quala Wash finally provided all of the requested information. This delay hindered the Union's ability to effectively investigate the grievance.

In response to the Company's unlawful delay, Teamsters Local 727 filed an unfair labor practice (ULP) charge with Region 13

of the National Labor Relations Board. The charge highlighted the Company's refusal to cooperate and its obstruction of the Union's right to access relevant information about the member's termination.

Region 13 investigated Quala Wash's unreasonable delay in providing information to the Union and found sufficient evidence to support the Union's charge. As a result, Region 13 obtained a settlement agreement between the Union and Quala Wash. As part of the agreement, the Company is required to post a notice in the employee locker room at the Chicago facility, making sure all workers are aware of the Company's unlawful actions and their rights as workers and union members.

"Teamsters Local 727 fights every day to ensure that companies like Quala Wash respect workers and follow the law," said John Coli, Jr. "Deliberately delaying information hurts everyone, and we won't let that stand."

PACE Division 135 Members **Gain** **Clinic Access**

On October 1, 2025, Pace Division 135 Drivers, Dispatchers, Schedulers, Mechanics, Payroll Clerks, Maintenance Clerks, and Utility workers became eligible to use the Teamsters Local 727 Health Clinic. They are in good company, which includes members from the following Local 727 represented industries and locations:

| | |
|---|---|
| ASSET PROTECTION & SECURITY SERVICES | HOLIDAY INN CHICAGO O'HARE |
| BALLY'S CHICAGO | HYATT REGENCY O'HARE |
| CHICAGO TRIBUNE DRIVERS | K.D.P. |
| CHICAGO ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY (Brookfield Zoo) | LOEWS CHICAGO O'HARE |
| CONTINENTAL AIR TRANSPORT | M-LANGE TAFT, LLC |
| COURTESY VALET SERVICE, INC | M & M MOTOR SERVICE |
| CPO HOSPITALITY, LLC | METRO ONE SERVICES, LLC |
| DOUBLETREE ROSEMONT HOTEL | METROPOLITAN PIER & EXPO-SECURITY |
| EMBASSY SUITES | MV TRANSPORTATION-LOYOLA |
| EVOLUTION PARKING (Valet) | NAVY PIER, INC |
| FILM & TELEVISION INDUSTRY MEMBERS | O'HARE SHUTTLE BUS |
| FUNERAL INDUSTRY MEMBERS | PARKING INDUSTRY MEMBERS (Commercial & Residential) |
| GREAT LAKES COCA-COLA DISTRIBUTION | PEPSI BEVERAGES NORTH AMERICA |
| HAWTHORNE RACE COURSE | PREFLIGHT, LLC |
| HEAT PARKING (Valet) | RIVER NORTH CAR WASH, INC. |
| HILTON MANAGEMENT, LLC O'HARE | ROIL ASSOCIATES, LLC |
| HILTON SUITES | ROLLEX CORPORATION |
| MAGNIFICENT MILE | TRADESHOW INDUSTRY MEMBERS |
| | TRADESHOW TRANSPORTATION, LLC |
| | U.S.M.M. INC |



Spring 2026 Edition

TEAMSTERS LOCAL 727

MEMBER NEWSLETTER

1300 W. Higgins Road, Suite 111
Park Ridge, IL 60068
(847) 696-7500 phone
(847) 720-4984 fax
TeamstersLocal727.org



Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Chicago, IL
Permit No. 2661

Some of my goals never change. I always hope to have the Local grow in membership numbers. I always want to get more members access to our employer paid Union healthcare. Without a doubt, every single year, I hope that any contract we're negotiating has the highest raises the members have ever seen. And I always hope my kids and my family, and your kids and your families, are healthy and happy.

In 2026, I'm hoping we can slow down a little bit. That instead of putting out fires, we're able to spend more time engaging members and figuring out what else we can do as a Local to support your everyday lives. Truly, I want to thank each and every one of you for the work you do and the support you show us. I know sometimes when we say "Union Brothers and Sisters" or "our Union family" it can feel cliché or put on, but I really do mean it. Watching your kids grow up and having so many of you be aunts and uncles to mine and doing work that matters that I really love makes me the luckiest man in the world. As always, we will continue to live by our motto: when we fight, we win.

