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UFCW 951 and Kroger reach early contract settlement

Grand Rapids, MI United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 951 announced today that it has reached a tentative agreement on a new contract with Kroger. UFCW 951 represents about 900 workers at Kroger stores in mid-Michigan. The current contract was set to expire in October this year and the new agreement will expire October 2011.

“Concluding this agreement early allows our members to gain improved wages and enhancements to their health benefits sooner. In assuring stability for our members and for Kroger, our hope is that it creates a platform from which Kroger can expand its presence in mid-Michigan,” said UFCW 951 President Marv Russow.

The new agreement incorporates health care enhancements included in a new contract reached last year between Kroger and UFCW Local 876, which also represents Kroger workers in Michigan. “We appreciate the constructive approach that Kroger took in opening these negotiations early. It is a sign of the positive labor-management relationship that we look forward to continuing,” Russow added.

Ratification voting by UFCW 951 members covered by the tentative contract will take place January 30 and 31, 2008. Details of the new agreement include annual top rate wage increases and reduced qualifying periods for health benefits. Members will also be covered by an improved Blue Cross/Blue Shield health insurance plan with \$10 doctor visits. Dental and vision coverage was added. The tentative agreement also maintains pension benefits for members hired prior to 1984, continues similar current benefits for all other members, and protects current premium pay rates.

UFCW 951 is one of Michigan’s largest local unions, representing 30,000 members who work across the state at Meijer, Harding’s, Plumb’s, Polly’s, Rite Aid, Knouse Foods, Orchard Grove Extended Care Center, and Fry Krisp in addition to Kroger.