

For Immediate Release

Contact Person: Mike Potter, Director of Communications, UFCW 951

Office: 800.999.0951

### **UFCW 951 Announces Ratification of Innovative Health Care Benefits Plan at Meijer**

United Food and Commercial Workers Local 951 (UFCW) announced today that members of four UFCW unions who work at Meijer stores in Michigan, Ohio, and Kentucky have ratified proposed changes to their current contract regarding health care and other benefits. In addition to UFCW 951, UFCW Locals 1059, 1099, and 227, adopted the new Benefits Agreement. The vote was 4,456 in favor to 2,528 opposed—a margin of sixty-four percent voting yes.

“This pioneering agreement will secure health care benefits for all Meijer workers, including our members, from now through 2011,” said UFCW 951 President Bob Potter. It assures that more than 2 billion dollars will be available to cover health care costs over that time frame.”

“Perhaps more important, however,” Potter continued, “it proves that responsible unions and responsible employers can work together to solve problems so that the employer becomes more competitive and the workers needs are protected. We think this model agreement is testimony to the value of democracy in the workplace.”

Innovative features of the new agreement include coverage that provides all Meijer workers, from the bagger to the CEO, with the same options; a built-in annual review feature of plan financing and benefits; provisions for adopting new health care practices as they become available; company matching funds for those who choose a combined health savings plan/high deductible option; the simplification of plans from 31 plans to four; and the protection of health care options for part-time workers.

Under the umbrella name MBenefitsConnect, enrollment for the new plans is already underway for Meijer management employees and will take place for hourly workers in April 2006. Approximately 125,000 workers and their families throughout Meijer’s five-state operation will be covered by the new Benefits Agreement.