

# seek new contract

## Metro-North isn't bargaining in good faith, representatives say

Sean Gorman  
The Journal News

A coalition of unions representing Metro-North Railroad employees has ramped up efforts to get updated labor contracts.

The eight unions have accused the railroad of failing to bargain in good faith to give them new contracts. The last contracts between Metro-North and its 5,000 union workers expired Dec. 31, 2002.

"Our members have not had a wage increase since 2002 and given that they live in a high cost-of-living area, it's unacceptable," said Joel Parker, a spokesman for the coalition. "The company hasn't changed its position at the bargaining table in about a year."

Parker wouldn't go into specifics about what the union members were seeking but said "every issue is on the table," including wages, pensions and health-care costs.

"We are actively at the bargaining table, and we already have agreements with one-third of our work force, and the terms are reasonable and fair," said Marjorie Anders, a Metro-North spokeswoman. "Obviously we're going to have similar agreements with ... these other unions."

Anders wouldn't discuss what kind of terms the union coalition was seeking.

"We are declining to discuss the details of the bargaining," Anders said. "We're doing our bargaining at the table."

The unions said in a statement that they have been trying to reach labor agreements through the National Mediation Board, but the railroad has adopted a "take it or leave it" approach to each bargaining session. Labor officials have asked the board to release them from mediation, but so far that hasn't been done and union members are growing impatient, according to the coalition news release.

Donald West, a public information officer at the National Mediation Board in Washington, said he couldn't comment on open cases before the board.

A negotiating session between Metro-North and union representatives is scheduled for tomorrow, Parker said.

### Unions

■ Sheet Metal Workers International Association

■ Transport Workers Union of America Local 1001

■ International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 808

■ National Conference of Firemen and Others, SEU System Council 2

■ International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, District Lodge 19

■ American Railway and Airway Supervisors Association, Transportation Communication International Union/IAM Lodge 5041

■ International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers: Systems Council 7, Local 1573

■ Transportation Communications International Union/IAM; System Board No. 86 and districts 227, 1043, 1402