

Bikeshare Workers Ratify 1st TWU Contract

LOCAL 100'S NEWEST MEMBERS HAVE RATIFIED a landmark contract for the nation's newest transportation workers.

They are the workers who operate New York City Bike-share LLC, the largest bikeshare operation in the United States. Local 100 President John Samuelsen announced the ratification by an 83 percent margin on July 16, 2015.

"This is an historic contract," said Samuelsen. "It greatly improves the income and benefits of these dedicated workers but just as importantly will lead to better service. The workers organized and joined Local 100 in September 2014 first and foremost to improve a problem-plagued bike-share operation that was being terribly managed and was in jeopardy of failing on the biggest stage. They wanted union clout in order to be heard and help their supervisors put the company on the road to recovery. Thanks to this contract and new company management, bikeshare is now on that road."

The four-and-a-half-year agreement, the first for bikeshare workers in North America, covers nearly 200 workers at NYCBS (more popularly known as Citibike), a rapidly growing company that is in the midst of a major expansion in New York City. The company wants to double its fleet of the well-liked baby blue bikes from 6,000 to 12,000 by 2017. The company is also expanding its service area from the financial district and midtown north to 130th street, and from downtown Brooklyn to Bedford-Stuyvesant, Williamsburg, Greenpoint, Crown Heights and Red Hook. It plans to service Long Island City and Astoria in a first step in Queens. It's expanding to Jersey City as well.

"I am gratified that the members have shown their strong support in their ballots, but more importantly for their support throughout the process," Samuelsen added.

Under the agreement, the workers win raises of more than 20% over the contract period. Full-time employees in NYC will get an immediate average 10% boost to their hourly rates, a key worker goal, and will receive periodic raises throughout the life of the agreement.

The contract includes creation of an empowered Workers' Council, a key union goal, to meet regularly with management. Organizer/Negotiator Nick Bedell explained that the council will serve as a forum for worker representatives

to propose operational changes and resolve work place problems.

The contract also mandates predictable and stable schedules for workers who will pick assignments through seniority. It establishes a system enabling workers to get priority for promotions. It also provides a grievance and discipline procedure to guarantee just cause. The union won an array of other economic and benefit enhancements, including 8 weeks of fully paid parental leave, eight paid holidays, the establishment of substantial paid annual vacation, paid medical benefits and night differential.



President Samuelsen announces first ever bikeshare contract at union-hall presser.

In NYC, Local 100 represents approximately 200 mechanics, technicians, call center agents and "balancers," staffers who supply docking stations with bicycles. The union also represents 300 additional workers at Capital Bike in Washington D.C., Divvy in Chicago and Hubway in Boston.

Samuelsen expressed hope that the New York contract will serve as a blueprint for negotiation in the union's other represented cities, and eventually as the foundation of a national bikeshare agreement.

Bikeshare was launched in New York in May 2013. The union immediately embraced bikeshare as an important addition to public transportation with a great potential for growth here and in other American cities. Samuelsen encouraged the workers early on to seek self-determination by joining TWU.