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MAYOR EMANUEL HAILS NEW LABOR AGREEMENT WITH CTA IRON WORKERS

*More Flexibility, Reduced OT Among Changes;
Mayor Also Highlights Recent Deals with SEIU*

Mayor Rahm Emanuel today joined Chicago Transit Authority President Forrest Claypool in announcing a tentative agreement with one of the CTA's oldest labor unions that will provide more flexibility and cost savings for CTA construction work. The changes will allow the CTA to hire additional iron workers to repair and maintain the system's aging infrastructure more efficiently.

The one-year agreement with the International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers Local Union #1 covers nearly 70 ironworkers at the CTA. Among the changes from the previous agreement are new flexibility for structuring work shifts and more flexibility to utilize foremen.

"This is a sound agreement that protects taxpayer investments and increases efficiency in services provided to the public," said Mayor Emanuel. "It is essential that we have world class infrastructure in Chicago, and this agreement allows us to maintain and improve our infrastructure in a responsible, forward-thinking way."

The new agreement will allow accelerated rehabilitation throughout the CTA's vast system of elevated track structures, including a major slow zone remediation project on the Brown and Purple Lines between the Merchandise Mart and Armitage Avenue, known as the Ravenswood Connector.

Standing with Iron Worker union leadership, Mayor Emanuel announced that the Ravenswood Connector rehabilitation will begin next spring and run through 2014. The Connector, built in the late 1800s, will undergo a \$66 million structure and track rehab

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starting in 2013. Local #1 Iron Workers will handle much of the structural ironwork repairs, representing more than half the project--including repair and replacement of components on the steel structure.

The project will improve the safety and reliability of a key segment of the Brown and Purple Lines and shave 2-3 minutes off the average commute. The Brown Line has experienced some of the highest ridership growth among CTA rail lines in recent years, adding two million rides in 2011.

The Ravenswood Connector project will create about 180 new construction jobs, including 60 for ironworkers, 35 of which will be new hires. The CTA anticipates keeping the majority of the new iron worker positions after the project is completed in 2014 to accelerate preventive maintenance on rail structures.

“Iron workers are critical to the CTA’s operations, and our in-house forces work on nearly all of our capital projects, especially those involving structural work,” said Claypool. “Local #1 has been a very cooperative partner in reaching a tentative agreement that help us complete projects on time and on budget, while providing the best service possible to CTA customers.”

The agreement helps lower overtime costs by allowing the CTA to more efficiently run three consecutive work shifts at regular time, instead of overtime. The new work rules also lower the number of required workers on the afternoon shift—which includes the afternoon rush hour and is typically the least-efficient shift.

“These changes in work rules provide us greater flexibility to meet the demands of upgrading our infrastructure while minimizing the impact on customers,” Claypool said.

Also, the agreement makes foremen more productive by allowing them to both supervise and work alongside journeyman iron workers, increasing project efficiency.

The agreement also calls for a \$1.04 increase in hourly wage rates for workers and foremen, and CTA contributions to the union’s health and pension funds.

The Mayor was also joined at the event by representatives from SEIU, which has agreed to multiple labor deals with the city of Chicago in recent months, including the Unit 2 collective bargaining agreement, and the introduction of competitive bidding for custodial services at the airport. These are among a number of agreements with various labor unions in the city and at McCormick Place that have resulted in increased efficiency, taxpayer savings, and a better climate for job growth and economic development.

The tentative agreement is expected to be ratified by Local #1’s membership and the Chicago Transit Board later this year.

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