

Now is the time

On Aug. 19 & 20, grocery members will vote to accept or reject the companies' latest proposals

Now is the time. After more than half a year of bargaining with the major grocery companies in Southern California, it is time for you to step up and cast judgment on the companies' latest proposals for a new labor contract.

On Friday, Aug. 19, our retail food members will gather at special meetings in Bloomington, Perris, Victorville and Rancho Mirage. More meetings are scheduled on Saturday, Aug. 20, in El Centro and Blythe.

At these meetings, our members will learn about any proposals the employers have on the table and then vote on whether to accept or reject them.

We urge all of our members employed by Albertsons, Ralphs and Vons to attend one of these meetings.

We will not be alone as we make our choice on that day. Tens of thousands of other grocery workers in six other UFCW Local Unions across Southern California will be doing the same thing.

Accept or reject?

As I write this message, it is too soon to say whether your union will recommend acceptance or rejection of management's proposals. That decision will depend on the employers' willingness to move from their current positions and reach a fair compromise with our



By Bill Lathrop

negotiators.

So far, we have made good progress on some issues — notably pensions — but the employers' current offer on health care issues is unacceptable.

A revised offer by management is a small step in the right direction, but it

still shifts far too much of the burden of rising health care costs onto grocery workers.

The next few days are critical to our union's success in these negotiations. Nobody wants a strike, but we could be reaching the point where a labor dispute is the only credible option for defending our hard-won wages, benefits and job protections.

Now is the time for us to show what members of UFCW Local 1167 are made of.

We are strong, we are united, and we are determined to protect our claim to the American Dream.

Please come to the meeting nearest you and make your voice heard!