



# Dow Jones Union Tentatively OKs New Contract

[Louis Hau](#), 09.16.07, 11:23 PM ET

Once he completes his takeover of **Dow Jones** later this year, **News Corp.** head honcho Rupert Murdoch will have a lot of things on his plate. Labor strife probably won't be one of them.

The board of the union representing about 2,000 employees at *The Wall Street Journal*, Dow Jones Newswires and other **Dow Jones** (nyse: [DJ - news - people](#)) business units said Sunday that it is recommending approval of a new three-year contract that it reached with company negotiators last week.

Steven Yount, president of the Independent Association of Publishers' Employees, Communication Workers of America Local 1096, notified the IAPE membership about the recommendation in an e-mail message Sunday night.

"Obviously, this contract is not everything that we wanted – and the Board believes it is short of the Quality Contract that you deserve as the people who, day in and day out, create one of the most trusted and respected products in the world," Yount said in his message. "But the Board also believes – at this time, under these conditions – this is the best package available."

Dow Jones spokeswoman Linda Dunbar declined to comment on the contract.

The union's membership has until Oct. 15 to ratify the proposed labor pact, which calls for annual pay raises of 3%, additional days off and an improved severance package in the event that jobs are outsourced. Employees will pay higher health-care premiums and prescription drug co-pays and, in a particularly sensitive concession, new employees hired after the contract is ratified won't receive the same retirement benefits as current employees.

To emphasize the relative appeal of the contract, Yount attached information in his e-mail outlining the outcome of recent contract talks at about a dozen other newspapers, including *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*.

None of them negotiated as attractive a deal as the proposed pact with Dow Jones employees, Yount said Sunday.

“ *The Wall Street Journal* is a better newspaper, a more prestigious newspaper,” he said. “Because of that, the contract should be better.”

Unionized employees at Dow Jones have been working without a contract since their last contract extension expired at the end of March. Negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement began in November of last year; signs of rancor emerged in recent months as the talks dragged on. IAPE members staged temporary work stoppages and adorned the *Journal* newsroom with signs poking fun at Murdoch and the company’s latest wage proposals.