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## LABOR SCENE

# UPS will listen to rival

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A rival to the **Teamsters** union will get a chance to organize workers at a **UPS Freight Inc.** terminal in Kansas City, Kan.

The **National Labor Relations Board** will hold a union representation election Aug. 5-7 for hourly UPS Freight workers at 3800 Kansas Ave., said Dan Hubbel, assistant director of the agency's regional office.

About 350 drivers and dockworkers will decide whether to authorize the **Association of Parcel Workers of America** to become their bargaining agent.

The parcel workers association calls itself a group of more than 12,000 disgruntled UPS package workers represented by the Teamsters. A key issue for the group is reforming the pension plan, which the group says will not provide the level of promised benefits.

UPS Freight is a less-than-truckload carrier previously known as **Overnite Transportation Co.** The Teamsters embarked on a national organizing campaign in the mid-1990s to unionize Overnite, but ultimately failed.

Workers at the Kansas City, Kan., terminal were the first Overnite group to join the Teamsters in 1994, but they decertified the union in 2002. UPS acquired Overnite in 2005.

Van Skillman, a UPS package driver in Greensboro, N.C., is president of the parcel workers association. Skillman was in the area July 7 and 8, meeting with UPS Freight workers.

“We were setting up the structure for the campaign,” said Skillman, who also returned to Kansas City this past weekend. “We’ve got really big support in Kansas City. I believe we’re going to win.”

Skillman previously has said that if the association is successful here, it will move the effort to other terminals.

The Teamsters currently represent about 125 UPS Freight employees at one terminal in Indianapolis. The company and the union are in midst of negotiating a new agreement. Trucking analysts think a contract achieved there will be used by the Teamsters to try to unionize other UPS Freight terminals.

In late June, a senior UPS Freight executive sent all employees a letter saying there is no current agreement with the Teamsters to pursue a national contract at UPS Freight following the bargaining in Indianapolis. Jack Holmes, UPS Freight’s senior vice president, also dismissed the parcel workers association as an alternative to the Teamsters.

“The truth is that the APWA is a labor organization just like any other,” Holmes wrote. “It relies on the same rhetoric and empty promises in its attempt to find members and build its bank accounts with dues and initiation fees.”

Skillman took issue with the letter.

“The company is mistaken in saying we are like the Teamsters or any other union,” he said. “We don’t want to break the company. We just want to make UPS a nicer place to work, so people will be happy and more productive.”

An official for Teamsters Local 41, which represented workers at the Kansas City, Kan., truck terminal before being decertified, could not be reached for comment Friday.

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