

Raley's union to vote this week on contract

By Dale Kasler, Sacramento Bee

In a make-or-break bid for labor peace, union leaders at Save Mart Supermarkets have ordered another vote on a contract agreement that members have already rejected.

Warning that the Modesto grocery chain is in difficult financial shape, leaders of Local 5 of the United Food and Commercial Workers in San Jose are urging their members to accept a "distasteful" contract that includes concessions. The vote will take place Thursday and Friday, and the ballots will be counted Saturday.

Central Valley employees, represented by Local 8 in Roseville, won't participate because they've already voted in favor of the contract. But they'll have a keen interest in the Bay Area outcome: The contract doesn't take effect for anyone until a majority of Save Mart workers across Northern California approve it.

Bay Area union leaders are pulling out all the stops to secure ratification. They're invoking union rules that would let Local 5's executive board approve the contract even if a majority of workers vote against it.

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