

Raley's says it has made final offer to grocery union

By Melissa Wiese, Sacramento Business Journal

Raley's Inc. says it has handed over its final offer to the union covering its workers.

The West Sacramento-based grocery chain has been in negotiations with the United Food and Commercial Workers for 14 months, according to a Raley's spokesman.

The proposal includes a health care plan that's almost the same as the one offered to other Raley's employees, including store directors, according to the store. And the offer doesn't get rid of paid vacation and holidays, unlike a union agreement recently made with Modesto-based Save Mart.

"We simply do not feel it is right to take away paid vacation and holiday time from our hardworking employees in order to reduce our expenses," John Seagale, spokesman for Raley's, said in a statement.

Despite Raley's statement of a final offer, the union isn't buying it.

"This proposal is inferior to what was already rejected by Raley's members during voting that also authorized a strike, if necessary," Jacques Loveall, UFCW Local 5 president, said in a statement on the union's website. He said mediators want to talk with the union and the grocery chain.

Raley's recently announced it would temporarily halt store closures as it moves to save money through cutting expenses and increasing sales. However, it also said the chain needed an "immediate resolution on the union contract."