

## HVLA workers protest lockout Tuesday

Contributed by Elizabeth Larson  
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HIDDEN VALLEY LAKE &ndash; Hidden Valley Lake Association employees on Tuesday were protesting what they said was the association management's decision to lock them out of work during ongoing contract negotiations. {sidebar id=106}

HVLA has 16 to 18 employees &ndash; most of them golf course maintenance workers, plus building maintenance and a few janitors &ndash; represented by Laborers International Union of North America, Local 139, based on Eureka, according to the union's business manager, Dave George.

George said HVLA officials have not given the union a reason for the action.

HVLA General Manager Jim Johnson would not comment on the situation when contacted by Lake County News on Tuesday.

Johnson said a statement will be issued once the association's attorney has approved it.

The union had a contract extension with HVLA until Friday, Nov. 14, said George. The lockout began on Saturday, when a union member who works as a janitor arrived and found he was locked out.

A second janitor was locked out Sunday, and the remainder of the union members were locked out of work on Monday, George said.

George, who accused HVLA of negotiating "in bad faith," said the union is taking its case to the National Labor Relations Board.

"We've filed a charge with the National Labor Relations Board to try to get injunctive relief to try to force the employer to put them back to work," he said.

On Monday and Tuesday, union members carried signs protesting what George said was an illegal lockout.

Union members participating in the protest said they were not authorized to speak on behalf of the union.

Instead, they handed out flyers explaining their case and asking for people to attend the next HVLA Board of Directors meeting, scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Thursday, Nov. 20.

They also asked for donations of food and toys to get through the upcoming holiday season.

Local 139 has represented workers at HVLA since 1996, said George.

George said negotiations between Local 139 and HVLA have been taking place "off and on" for some months. In talks with HVLA, it's come up that the association needs to cut its expenses 20 percent.

During the recent negotiations, George said HVLA brought in an attorney for the first time. "We've never used attorneys in negotiations," he said.

"It was not our choice, it was their choice," said George. "They've been bargaining in bad faith."

George said HVLA has refused to disclose workers' pay rates, most of which he guessed are around \$11 to \$13 per hour.

"They're trying to turn them into the working poor. They're there now, really," he said, adding that one of the union members has a home in foreclosure.

He said he had asked to meet with the HVLA Board of Directors but received no response. "We tried to head this off before it got to this point."

George said if the National Labor Resources Board finds for the union, HVLA could end up paying substantial amounts in back pay and benefits. He said the union has filed charges against HVLA previously and entered into settlements with them.

Correspondent Aimee Gonsalves contributed to this report.

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