

# County OKs contract

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■ Commissioners approve deal with no raise this year, 2.5 percent raises in 2013, 2014

Lake County commissioners have approved a three-year contract with one of the county's collective bargaining units.

The contract approved Tuesday is with the Communications Workers Of America, Local 4340, which represents 69 county employees, said Bill Margalis, director of administrative services.

The deal provides no wage increase this year and 2.5 percent increases in 2013 and 2014.

About 45 employees are part of the county's Buildings and Grounds Department,

and the other employees come from the departments of telecommunications, building inspection, county garage, dog warden, mail room and central purchasing.

To help offset the wage

increases for 2013 and 2014, employees who had been eligible for longevity payments in those two years won't receive them, Margalis said.

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## Contract

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Eligible employees will receive the longevity payments this year, because there will be no wage increase.

The previous contract with this bargaining unit had expired April 1 and the new agreement will be effective retroactively.

County officials said the contract could be an indicator of how upcoming contract negotiations could play out.

Many of the contracts previously approved by commissioners with county employees had contained no wage increases, but included the right to reopen negotiations at different points within a contract, Margalis said.

The 2.5 percent wage increases next year and for 2014 in this contract may be a sign of how negotiations could go with other bargaining units.

"That may be a signal if we reopen a contract next year," Margalis said. "It can set the tone for future contracts."