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### **UNION RATIFIES ESAB CONTRACT** *Employees will return to work next month*

**Hanover, PA** – Members of UAW Local 1968, the labor union representing most of ESAB Welding and Cutting Product's Hanover employees, voted to ratify a new contract today paving the way for their return to work in a few weeks.

The contract had been hammered out by union and ESAB negotiators last Thursday and ends the union strike that began on March 27.

“We are very, very pleased the union accepted the contract,” said John Frederick, human resources manager at the Hanover plant. “We are eager to get everyone back to work and focusing on the needs of our customers.”

The union is assessing how many members will return to the plant, said Bob Kahlbaugh, president of Local 1968. Since the strike, some members have retired or taken other jobs, he added.

“Our members are eager to return to work, which was demonstrated by the vote today,” said Kahlbaugh. “It has been a long seven months and we are ready to put this strike behind us.” Both Frederick and Kahlbaugh praised the tireless work of the union and company bargaining teams, who met some 45 times to work out the final contract. They also said the federal mediator was a critical player in resolving differences during the negotiations.

Frederick praised all the ESAB salaried employees and those from other plants who worked long hours to keep the operations going during the strike before replacement workers were hired. Kahlbaugh said he wanted to thank the union members who weathered the strike and kept their eyes on the prize – to get a contract and return to work.

The three-year contract will include a new 24-hour, seven-day-a-week work schedule at the plant. It now operates five days a week. The new schedule alleviates one of the union's main  
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concerns during the original negotiations: mandatory overtime. The revised schedule will increase the number of employees at the plant from about 255 to about 340, meaning many of the replacement workers will retain their jobs.

The contract also includes substantial wage increases, modifications to the healthcare plan that includes employee contributions, and a new 401k plan with a company match.

At the same time, ESAB also has announced it is making a long-term investment in the Hanover plant through a major upgrading of machinery, Frederick said.

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ESAB Welding & Cutting Products is one of the world's largest and most experienced manufacturers of welding and cutting equipment and welding filler metals. Recognized as the technological leader in the industry, ESAB is committed to providing customized solutions for its customers.