Twin City Ambulance workers approve new contract

By Matt Glynn NEWS BUSINESS REPORTER

Emergency medical technicians and paramedics at Twin City Ambulance Corp. have approved a five-year deal, even before their existing contract expired.

Starting pay for EMTs has increased by 26 percent to $10 per hour from $7.95 per hour, not including benefits, said Thomas Maxian, chief executive officer and general counsel for Twin City Ambulance.

The workers are represented by Local 394 of the International Association of EMTs and Paramedics. The deal, ratified by a 2-1 margin, took effect June 18 and replaced a contract that went into effect in November 2004 and was due to expire Sept. 30.

City of Tonawanda-based Twin City Ambulance, which employs nearly 200 people, began negotiations with the union in May 2006.

Maxian said that since the last contract took effect, the family-owned business had significantly expanded its service territory, and had added stand-by service for HSBC Arena events.

In light of those changes and employment growth, the company and union decided to get to started early on talks for a new deal, Maxian said.

“We really worked hard with the union and everybody cooperated very nicely,” he said.

The pay increases vary depending on employees’ certification level and years of experience.

Starting pay for EMT-basic employees ranges from $27,000 to $28,900, while EMT-intermediate employees’ starting pay ranges from $29,700 to $33,500. Paramedics’ starting pay is $38,500 to $47,900.

In addition to pay increases, employees will receive a better uniform and footwear package, more paid holidays and retirement benefits.

Maxian and James Lilly, Local 394’s acting president, said they hope the wage increases and retirement plan will encourage more people to consider emergency medical service as a career, instead of just resume-building “stepping stones.”

“What we’re seeing now is more career-minded people, which is spectacular,” Lilly said.

Twin City Ambulance provides service to several communities in Erie and Niagara counties.

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