

Bus drivers, OCTA will meet again

A judge orders a settlement conference in wage dispute.

By ELLYN PAK
THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

SANTA ANA • An Orange County Superior Court judge on Monday ordered a mandatory settlement conference between a union representing bus drivers and the Orange County Transportation Authority next month. They will meet June 1.

Judge Dennis S. Choate met with representatives of both parties, continuing any motions related to an amended lawsuit filed Monday by Teamsters Local 952. The union contends that OCTA bargained in bad faith during negotiations on wage and benefits.

"We are not going to let them sweep us under the rug," said Patrick D. Kelly, principal officer of the union. "We keep our word. We expect other people to keep their word."

A mandatory settlement conference is a last ditch effort short of a trial or a strike.

"OCTA believes any legal action is a distraction from the real issue, which is getting both parties talking again and working together towards a fair resolution for our coach operators and bus customers," said spokesman Joel Zlotnik.