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The people who power Springfield's leading news source voted 13-0 Friday to form the Springfield News Guild.

The historic decision by every full-time reporter, photographer and producer is yet another step toward taking some local control of local news.

"Today, the staff of the News-Leader took a major step forward in our effort to preserve and strengthen local journalism in Springfield," education reporter Claudette Riley said. "Now the hard part begins as we bargain in good faith to forge a fair contract."

In the coming weeks, the News Guild will begin negotiating a contract that puts Springfield and its journalists back at the center of how Springfield's newspaper works.

Since we announced our intent to organize Jan. 6, communication with our local and corporate supervisors has been open and respectful.

We hope that respect will continue to define our relationship in the coming months.

We are aware that our industry faces many challenges, but we also remain certain that investing in people and journalism is the best way forward and the only way to survive.

"This was a big step for us – and a much-needed step," columnist Steve Pokin said. "Now, we look forward to finally having a voice at the table on how we are treated by our corporate owners and advocating for the resources the News-Leader needs to fulfill its mission of covering local news." |