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Retiree Benefits

Briggs & Stratton Settles Retiree Class Action for \$3.95M



By Jacklyn Wille

April 13 — Briggs & Stratton Corp. agreed to pay \$3.95 million to settle class action claims by union retirees who accused the company of reducing their health benefits in violation of collective bargaining agreements (*Merrill v. Briggs & Stratton Corp.*, E.D. Wis., No. 2:10-cv-00700-LA, *motion for preliminary settlement approval filed 4/12/16*).

According to the proposed settlement agreement, filed April 12 in a Wisconsin federal court, Briggs & Stratton also promised to continue the retirees' medical, vision and dental benefits according to the arrangement announced in 2010.

Last summer, Judge Lynn Adelman ruled that the retirees could proceed to trial on their claims after finding ambiguities in the bargaining agreement provisions governing retiree health benefits (172 PBD, 9/4/15).

The retirees accused the company of cutting their health benefits after promising to provide company-paid health coverage for retirees with 30 or more years of service until the age of 65.

The parties' settlement agreement hasn't yet been approved by the judge.

Feinstein Doyle Payne & Kravec LLC represented the retirees, along with Previant Goldberg Uelmen Gratz Miller & Brueggeman SC. Morgan Lewis & Bockius LLP and Quarles & Brady LLP represented the company.

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BNA Snapshot

Merrill v. Briggs & Stratton Corp., E.D. Wis., No. 2:10-cv-00700-LA, *motion for preliminary settlement approval filed 4/12/16*

Development: Briggs & Stratton reaches \$3.95 million settlement with retirees challenging health-care reductions.

Takeaway: Retirees accused company of cutting health benefits in violation of collective bargaining agreements.

For More Information

Text of the motion for settlement approval is at

http://www.bloomberglaw.com/public/document/Merrill_et_al_v_Briggs_Stratton_Corporation_et_al_Docket_No_210c/1.

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