

I'm not teaching: college president

BY TERESA LATCHFORD
Staff Writer

A plan that could see management teaching students while lecturers walk the picket line is making at least one college president laugh.

A guarantee from Ontario's 24 colleges to ensure completion of their semester would have seen department managers running classes in order to make sure students earn credits and degrees.

Each college is working on a plan that works for it. Details of the semester completion strategy will be released next week.

However, when a college suggested management will be taking over class instruction, Seneca College president Rick Miner said it is not a feasible idea and won't be happening at his college.

"I don't want to teach fashion arts or aviation," he said with a laugh. "I don't have the expertise for fashion and I can't fly."

Seneca will be focused on helping those 3,500 students scheduled to graduate first by looking at each and exploring alternatives he or she has, he added.

For example, a marketing research student will continue to work on final projects and the college will provide the student with a contact for outline and advice purposes.

"For the aviation students, we would look for alternative aircraft locations to help them complete their required flight hours," he said.

He hopes the college will not have to use the plans and is still positive a deal will be reached shortly and the faculty will return to the classrooms.

However, the negotiation table continues to be empty after 9,100 Ontario Public Services Employees Union members from 24 colleges walked off the job March 7, protesting a contract offered by management the union claims did not address the issues of smaller class sizes and hiring of more full-time faculty.

"There is nothing to talk about until management is willing to change their offer," said Larry Olivo, an OPSEU representative for Local 560.

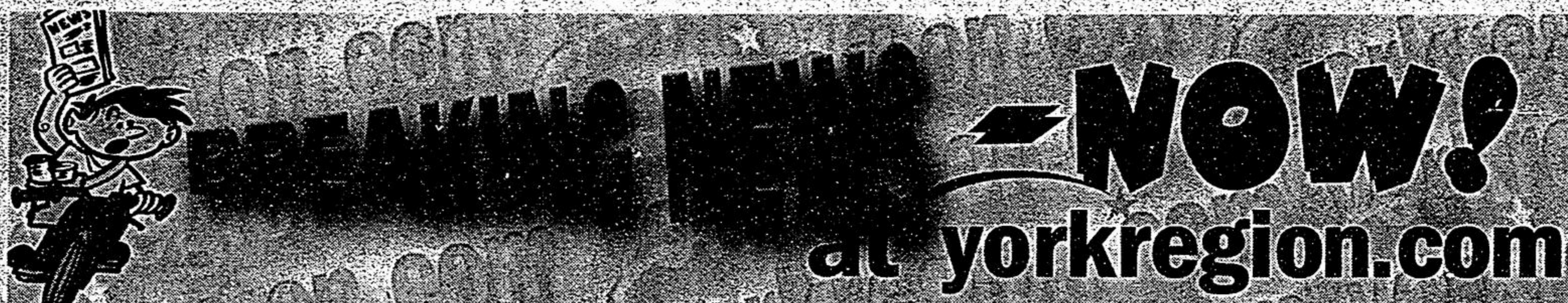
He claims the same contract has been offered by management for 13 months and OPSEU has rejected it numerous times.

As for the colleges presenting the guarantee to students, union members it could pull both sides farther apart prolonging the strike.

"There is nothing going on right now but there is a lot of pressure out there to solve this," Mr. Olivo said.

"I think both sides are reconsidering their options right now."

No talks are currently scheduled.

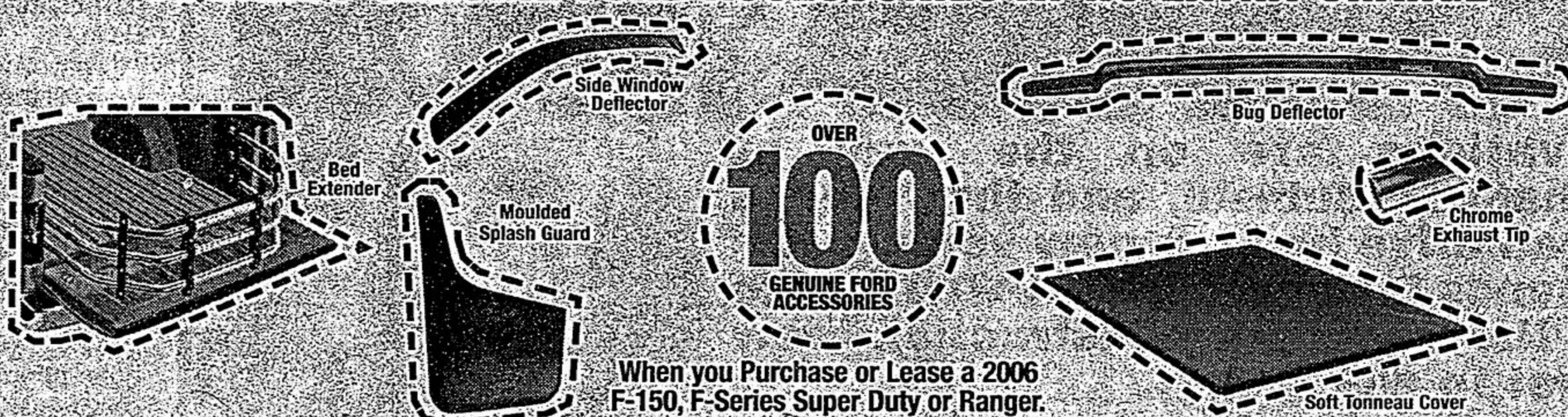


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