



By Brad Carl, Meteorologist and Reporter

# Local companies react to call for higher minimum wage

UPDATED 5:57 AM CST Jan 29, 2014

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40/29 talked to local companies in the area about what they think about President Barack Obama's proposed minimum wage contractors and what that would mean for their workers.

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**SPRINGDALE, Ark** — President Obama said he'll raise the minimum wage for workers on federal contracts and it would go up to \$10.10 an hour.

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Ozark Regional Transit said they don't currently have any federal contracts, but they have before, and they might again in the future. Each of their 51 employees, including supervisors, mechanics, and bus drivers, already make above the \$10.10 proposed by Obama.

Executive director Joel Gardner said this gives his company an advantage as a high wage helps him attract the best employees.

"We want people that are responsible. We want people that are conscientious, good customer service personnel, and we do have to

pay, we choose to pay the \$10.50 an hour so that we can hopefully get a better employee who's going to stay with us for a long period of time," said Gardner.

Local economists said they expect this will be a similar story across the entire area.

"It depends on what kind of wages they pay now. How much of their workforce is in fact tied to the minimum wage. Certainly, many federal contractors make more than the minimum wage and so this actually doesn't affect them in a strong way," said Kathy Deck, the director of business and economic research at the University of Arkansas.

A Tyson Foods representative said they also have federal contracts, but those workers already make more than \$12 an hour.

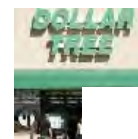
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