

Laid-off GM workers eligible for tuition aid

General Motors Corp. and the United Auto Workers union have announced a \$9.2-million tuition-assistance plan for laid-off GM-UAW workers.

UAW Vice President Donald F. Ephlin, director of the union's General Motors Department, and Alfred S. Warren Jr., vice president in charge of GM's industrial relations staff, said as many as 70,000 indefinitely laid-off GM workers who retain recall or rehiring rights will be eligible.

The program begins Jan. 1, 1984.

"WHAT IS new about his plan," said Warren, "is that all qualified laid-off workers will be able to receive assistance in the form of up-front payment to an accredited college, university or certified vocational school."

"This is in recognition of the fact that laid-off employees are less likely to have 'up-front' money for tuition," he added.

The newly negotiated "GM-UAW National Tuition Assistance Plan for Laid-Off Workers" is an innovative variation

of GM's longstanding Tuition Refund Plan, under which GM employees are reimbursed tuition fees after successfully completing educational courses related to their employment.

The plan provides for "up-front" money and requires only that courses selected by eligible laid-off workers be taken at accredited or licensed schools. Courses of study need not be related to the laid-off workers' previous GM employment.

"AS A RESULT of the 1982 negotia-

tions, GM and the UAW have embarked upon an ambitious undertaking — providing working and laid-off members opportunities for education and retraining that will prepare them to re-enter the workforce and rebuild for the future," Ephlin said.

"This new plan is designed to help laid-off employees improve their chances of re-employment either with General Motors or with some other employer."

Ephlin and Warren said the plan will

provide for tuition assistance from a special GM-UAW fund. Tuition will be paid directly to the schools teaching the course in which the participant is enrolled. Qualified workers will be eligible for tuition and fees up to \$1,000 a year.

Depending on their seniority with GM and layoff status, program participants may qualify for tuition assistance up to four years or a total of \$4,000.

THE NEW program is another major

step toward worker retraining and job placement undertaken by GM and the UAW as a result of their historic 1982 labor agreement.

The 1982 agreement established a Joint Skill Development and Training Committee to promote training, retraining and related activities to upgrade the skills of GM workers nationwide. GM funding of five cents per straight-time hour worked by UAW-GM workers was established under the agreement to assist laid-off workers in this regard.

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