PENSIONS AND OTHER POSTRETIREMENT BENEFITS

We sponsor several single-employer defined benefit pension plans, the majority of which have been frozen. We also participate in joint Company and Guild-sponsored plans covering employees of The New York Times Newspaper Guild, including The Newspaper Guild of New York - The New York Times Pension Fund, which was frozen and replaced with a new defined benefit pension plan, The Guild-Times Adjustable Pension Plan.

The table below includes the liability for all of these plans.

(In thousands)		December 28, 2014		December 29, 2013
Pension and other postretirement liabilities	**$**	**728,577**	$	563,162
Total liabilities	**$**	**1,838,125**	$	1,726,018
Percentage of pension and other postretirement liabilities to total liabilities		**40%**		33%

Pension Benefits

Our Company-sponsored defined benefit pension plans include qualified plans (funded) as well as non-qualified plans (unfunded). These plans provide participating employees with retirement benefits in accordance with benefit formulas detailed in each plan. All of our non-qualified plans, which provide enhanced retirement benefits to select employees, are currently frozen, except for a foreign-based pension plan discussed below. The New York Times Newspaper Guild pension plan is a qualified plan and is also included in the table below.

We also have a foreign-based pension plan for certain non-U.S. employees (the "foreign plan"). The information for the foreign plan is combined with the information for U.S. non-qualified plans. The benefit obligation of the foreign plan is immaterial to our total benefit obligation.

The funded status of our qualified and non-qualified pension plans as of December 28, 2014 is as follows:

	December 28, 2014					
(In thousands)		Qualified Plans		Non-Qualified Plans		All Plans
Pension obligation	$	2,101,573	$	267,824	$	2,369,397
Fair value of plan assets		1,837,250		—		1,837,250
Pension underfunded/unfunded obligation, net	**$**	**264,323**	**$**	**267,824**	**$**	**532,147**

We made contributions of approximately $15 million to certain qualified pension plans in 2014. We expect contributions to total approximately $9 million to satisfy minimum funding requirements in 2015.

Pension expense is calculated using a number of actuarial assumptions, including an expected long-term rate of return on assets (for qualified plans) and a discount rate. Our methodology in selecting these actuarial assumptions is discussed below.

In determining the expected long-term rate of return on assets, we evaluated input from our investment consultants, actuaries and investment management firms, including our review of asset class return expectations, as well as long-term historical asset class returns. Projected returns by such consultants and economists are based on broad equity and bond indices. Our objective is to select an average rate of earnings expected on existing plan assets and expected contributions to the plan during the year. The expected long-term rate of return determined on this basis was 7.00% at the beginning of 2014. Our plan assets had an average rate of return of approximately 14.3% in 2014 and an average annual return of approximately 12.6% over the three-year period 2012-2014. We regularly review our actual asset allocation and periodically rebalance our investments to meet our investment strategy.

The value ("market-related value") of plan assets is multiplied by the expected long-term rate of return on assets to compute the expected return on plan assets, a component of net periodic pension cost. The market-related value of plan assets is a calculated value that recognizes changes in fair value over three years.

Based on the composition of our assets at the end of the year, we estimated our 2015 expected long-term rate of return to be 7.00%, equal to 2014. If we had decreased our expected long-term rate of return on our plan assets by 50