

SPEEA and Spirit reach tentative agreement on new WTPU contract



WICHITA, KS – Negotiators for technical and professional workers at Spirit AeroSystems are unanimously recommending union members approve the tentative agreement reached Tuesday (Nov. 29) for a new contract.

The tentative agreement covers 2,300 employees in the Wichita Technical and Professional Unit (WTPU) of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001. Employees have been working without a contract since July 28.

If ratified by a vote of union members, the negotiated agreement will provide a signing bonus of \$2,000, annual market based raises starting in 2012, participation in the Spirit Incentive Plan and increased restrictions on Spirit's use of contract labor.

Bargaining unit council representatives also voted unanimously to recommend approval of the offer after learning details at a special meeting Tuesday.

Voting will take place at an all-member meeting in the coming weeks. Union negotiators are planning lunchtime meetings for employees to hear details and ask questions about the tentative agreement. A copy of the negotiated agreement, showing changes in red, is posted on the SPEEA website at www.speea.org.

"The increase in membership we experienced in the past two months made a remarkable difference," said Bill Hartig, chair of the WTPU Negotiation Team. "The company listened to their employees and made significant improvements to their previous offer."

The contract would use the Salary Information Retrieval System (SIRS) by Mercer, LLC, an established salary benchmark, to determine salary pools for annual raises. Annual funds starting in 2012 will be the SIRS market increase of which .5% will be reserved for promotions and out-of-sequence raises.

Employees will participate in the Spirit Incentive Plan which is based on company performance targets. The 2012 payout would be a minimum of 3% to a maximum of 6%. The following two years, the target is 4% with a maximum of 8%. Years 2015 to 2020 the target is 6% with a maximum of 12%.

While the 9.5-year duration is longer than union negotiators wanted, they said tying increases to SIRS data and the escalating Incentive Plan targets assures salaries will remain competitive.

"Making sure a long-term contract had the right protections in place was key to these negotiations," said Bob Brewer, SPEEA Midwest director. "It has been a long journey and a tremendous amount of work and effort has been put in to get to the final result."

Union members rejected Spirit's initial offer by a margin of 96.5% in voting on July 28. Since that vote, union membership has swelled from 30% to 52% of the 2,300 employees included in the bargaining unit.

Overall, SPEEA represents 25,460 employees in Washington, Kansas, Oregon, Texas, Utah and California. SPEEA is affiliated with the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE).

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