

SPEEA Wichita Technical & Professional members approve new Spirit contract



WICHITA, KS – With more than six months of tough negotiations behind them, technical and professional members of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001, today (Dec. 12) approved a new contract with Spirit AeroSystems.

The 9½-year agreement, covering 2,300 employees, provides a \$2,000 signing advance before the end of the year, annual market-based raises starting in 2012, participation in the Spirit Incentive Plan and increases restrictions on the company’s use of contract labor.

Voting took place this afternoon at Curtis Middle School. The tally showed approval by 72 percent, with 548 “Yes” and 210 “No” votes. A second issue on the ballot seeking strike authorization power for the negotiation team if the contract was rejected was approved by 82.5 percent of members. The contract goes into effect immediately.

Union negotiators and the SPEEA Midwest Council unanimously recommended members approve the contract.

“This has been a long process but in the end the company listened to their employees and made significant improvements to their initial offer,” said Bill Hartig, chair of SPEEA’s Wichita Technical and Professional Unit (WTPU) negotiation team. “The contract accepted by the members today provides for both the health of the company and the well-being of our families and community.”

Negotiations started in June and continued past the previous contract’s expiration on July 11. Union membership surged after Spirit’s initial contract offer was overwhelmingly rejected on July 28 by 96.5 percent of voting union members.

“The increase in membership was a huge factor,” said Bob Brewer, SPEEA Midwest Director. “The company saw that and started listening.”

The contract is the first time SPEEA negotiated a long-term agreement. The length was made possible by the mutual agreement to use the independent Salary Information Retrieval System (SIRS) by Mercer, LLC, to determine salary pools for annual raises. Annual funds starting in 2012 will be the SIRS market increase, with 0.5 percent reserved for promotions and out-of-sequence raises.

“Using the SIRS data guarantees the bargaining unit will maintain its relationship in the aerospace market,” Brewer said. “Maintaining that relationship, and the market relationship of other economic factors, is significant because it ensures employees and the company remain competitive in the aerospace market throughout the life of the contract.”

The contract also puts WTPU employees into the Spirit Incentive Plan. The 2012 payout target is 3 percent to a maximum of 6 percent. The following two years, the target is 4 percent with a maximum of 8 percent. Years 2015 to 2020, the target is 6 percent, with a maximum of 12 percent.

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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