

SPEEA and Boeing resume contract negotiations Wednesday for 22,950 engineers and technical workers



SEATTLE – The union for engineers and technical workers resumes contract negotiations with The Boeing Company on Wednesday (Jan. 9) but the two sides remain far apart on major contract issues.

Members of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001, are marking the resumption of talks with a ‘Day of Action’ that includes lunchtime solidarity events at Boeing facilities from Everett to Portland and Utah.

“Our goal is to get a contract that respects the contributions engineers and technical workers had to creating the record profits and 4,200 airplane backlog Boeing has today,” said Ray Goforth, SPEEA executive director. “After Boeing tried and failed to build the 787 on the cheap, SPEEA members stepped up and saved the program. Everything has now turned around and the company has developed amnesia about how that happened.”

Negotiations resume at 1 p.m. at a SeaTac hotel with the assistance of the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS). FMCS Director George H. Cohen called a halt to talks Dec. 5 when negotiations appeared heading for a cliff. Since then, SPEEA members have started preparing for a strike by training picket site captains and informing members on how to hold a successful strike.

Wednesday’s ‘Day of Action’ events are expected to draw from dozens at small sites to hundreds and thousands of SPEEA members walking inside and outside Boeing facilities in Renton and Everett. Boeing has drawn three Unfair Labor Practice Charges (ULPs) for videotaping and photographing union members at the events, confiscating cameras and the photographs they held. All of the marches have been peaceful. The ULPs are awaiting action before the National Labor Relations Board.

SPEEA and Boeing started meeting in April to negotiate new contracts for 15,550 engineers and 7,400 technical workers. In October, engineers rejected Boeing’s initial offer by 95.5 percent. Technical workers rejected the company’s offer by 97 percent. Existing contracts expired Nov. 25.

A local of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), SPEEA represents 26,300 aerospace professionals at Boeing, Spirit AeroSystems in Wichita, Kansas, and Triumph Composite Systems, Inc. in Spokane, Wash.

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