

Spirit AeroSystems fueling difficult negotiations in U.S.A with SPEEA



Spirit AeroSystems, Inc., enjoying great success since buying a portion of The Boeing Company's commercial airline division in 2005, is facing labor unrest with engineers, technical and professional workers at the facility in Wichita, Kansas, U.S.A.

Now in the second week of talks with the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, Spirit is attempting to split employee groups with an unequal bonus system and shift thousands of dollars of medical costs onto the workers essential for continued success.

"Our expectations are that a company having the success Spirit is having will share some of it with its employees," said Ray Goforth, executive director of SPEEA.

Among the inequities offered to union employees is an incentive bonus plan that at best could only pay union members one-third of what the company provides non-union employees. Another part of the contract offer seeks cuts of 4 to 6 percent from pools used for wage increases.

Spirit is the primary manufacturer of the nose section of the 787 Dreamliner in addition to the fuselage for the 737 and various other parts for Boeing aircraft. The company has successfully used its experienced workforce to diversify beyond its roots in Boeing aircraft. Spirit recently received a \$1.7 billion (US) contract extension for work on the Airbus A350.

Spirit opened contract talks on Monday, July 7, for 675 engineers and 2,500 technical and professional workers represented by the Society of Professional Employees in Aerospace, IFPTE Local 2001. With facilities in Kansas and Oklahoma, Spirit also has operations in Prestwick, Scotland and Samlesbury, England.

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A local of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers, SPEEA represents more than 24,600 aerospace employees in the United States at Spirit, Boeing, Triumph Composite Systems and BAE Systems in Kansas, Washington, Oregon, California, Texas and Utah.

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