

## **SPEEA and Boeing meet to prepare for contract talks that open Oct. 28**



**SEATTLE** – At times heated and confrontational, a meeting between the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA – IFPTE Local 2001) and The Boeing Company today (Thursday, Oct. 16) produced the first meaningful discussion of issues since negotiation committees started meeting in March.

No major issues were decided. However, the exchange gives some hope Boeing will begin working major union issues, included medical benefits, outsourcing, providing a meaningful cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) and stopping efforts to cut employee groups from SPEEA contracts.

“There was more substantive talk about issues during this two-hour meeting than we’ve had with Boeing since committees started meeting eight months ago,” said Ray Goforth, SPEEA executive director. “We are hopeful this means the company is ready to start solving problems. Collective bargaining does not have to be a titanic struggle.”

The nearly 40 people attending the meeting at SPEEA headquarters included two representatives from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS). The representatives observed, but did not participate in the meeting.

Boeing used the meeting to present SPEEA with contract language that should see tentative agreement when main table talks open in less than two weeks. The majority of the items presented were no-change, cosmetic or clerical changes. Boeing has not agreed to a single major item.

A number of union data requests to Boeing remain unfilled. Among them are requests for additional information on medical benefits, compensation, outsourcing and the use of contractor labor at Boeing.

While the meeting was an improvement from previous sessions, Boeing restated opposition to many items, including keeping the defined benefit pension for new hires, stopping the cost-shifting of medical benefits onto employees, providing a meaningful COLA, and improving the vacation allotment to industry standards. Boeing reiterated its opposition to providing bereavement days. In addition, the company is opposed to honoring Martin Luther King Day as a paid holiday even as Airbus North America recognizes the federal holiday.

Main table negotiations with Boeing start at 2 p.m., Tuesday, Oct. 28, on neutral ground at the Doubletree Hotel in SeaTac. At stake are contracts for 20,600 employees in Washington, Oregon, Utah and California covered by the Puget Sound Prof and Tech contracts. Negotiations for 700 engineers at Boeing Wichita start Nov. 13.

A local of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), SPEEA represents more than 24,408 aerospace professionals at Boeing, Spirit, Triumph Composite Systems, Inc., in Spokane, Wash., and at BAE Systems, Inc., in Irving, Texas.

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