

SPEEA disappointed tanker decision leaves Boeing out



SEATTLE – Disappointment and shock echoed through the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001, today after the announcement that EADS/Northrop received the Air Force contract to build the next generation of aerial refueling tankers.

“I am very disappointed for our members and all employees at The Boeing Company,” said SPEEA President Cynthia Cole. “I’m surprised the Air Force chose an unproven technology and an inferior product for this important program that supports the men and women in our armed forces.”

The announcement drew protests from members and officials who took part in an afternoon rally at the Everett Hall of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM), District 751.

SPEEA members were instrumental in the design and engineering of Boeing’s KC-767AT (advanced tanker) that was in competition for the contract. Union leaders and members from SPEEA and the IAM, met with congressional leaders to emphasize the need to choose the Boeing 767 and keep taxpayers’ money and production of key military programs in the United States.

While firm numbers of SPEEA-represented employees working on the tanker program are not available, the program was expected to create 9,000 jobs in Washington state and about 600 jobs in Kansas. Union officials are already talking to Boeing about the impact of the contract loss.

In October, SPEEA begins main table negotiations with Boeing for 21,000 employees in Washington, Kansas, Oregon, Utah and California. Negotiations begin in May for 3,000 represented employees at Spirit AeroSystems, Inc. in Wichita, Kan.

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

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