

## **SPEEA says Boeing can do better as it asks members to strongly reject company offer to Wichita engineers**



**WICHITA, KS** – With The Boeing Company stalling to fulfill data requests and rejecting a counterproposal seeking employee protections if the company sells or divests Wichita operations, union negotiators today announced they are sending the offer to members for a vote with a strong recommendation to reject.

Members of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), IFPTE Local 2001, will vote on the latest contract offer from Boeing at a special, all-member meeting, from 5 to 6:30 p.m., Thursday, Feb. 5, in the auditorium of Curtis Middle School, 1031 South Edgemoor, Wichita.

“It’s time for members to let Boeing know engineers in Wichita deserve respect and a contract comparable to contracts provided to other engineers at the company,” said Joe Newberry, chair of the SPEEA Wichita Engineering Unit (WEU) negotiating team and a 35-year employee at the plant.

The 700 represented engineers at Boeing’s Integrated Defense Systems (IDS) plant here have been working under a contract extension since Dec. 5. SPEEA-represented employees continue a work-to-rule campaign at Wichita IDS that includes declining management requests to work voluntary overtime.

The SPEEA WEU Negotiation Team and the union’s Wichita Engineering Unit Council each recommend members vote ‘no’ to reject the offer. Voting down the offer provides union negotiators new leverage to secure an improved offer that meets the needs of represented engineers and their families.

Boeing’s offer creates raise pools of 3% in each of the three years of the contract. However, the raises are selectively given by managers so individual employees are not guaranteed an increase. Boeing’s offer eliminates the pension for new engineers and switches new employees to an HMO medical plan with increased out-of-pocket costs for less coverage.

The union seeks salary raise pools matching those of other engineers at Boeing, keeping the defined benefit pension for new hires and maintaining good medical coverage.

“Boeing is clearly trying to treat Wichita engineers in a lesser fashion than engineers in other locations,” said Ray Goforth, SPEEA executive director.

While Boeing this week announced new layoffs, Boeing leaders also said IDS had “outstanding operating performance” and a “robust backlog of \$73 billion” worth of orders waiting to be delivered.

Main table negotiations started Nov. 17, but the two sides have met on only 13 days. Many days, the sessions were less than one hour. At one point, Boeing negotiators walked away from talks without notifying the union. The week of Jan. 13, Boeing delivered what it called a “best and final” contract offer. Since delivering the offer, Boeing negotiators have not responded to union data requests, including information about any plans to sell the plant that provides jobs for more than 2,900 employees. While neither confirming nor denying Wichita IDS is for sale, Boeing officials said such information was ‘irrelevant’ to SPEEA contract negotiations.

Work at Wichita includes Italian and Japanese 767 tankers, E-4B (747 Airborne Operations Center) and E-737 Australian Wedgetail (Airborne Early Warning and Control Aircraft). The Italian tankers and Wedgetail are years behind schedule. While union members worked with management to secure the contract for the next aerial refueling tanker, the company refuses to commit to bringing the work to Wichita if Boeing secures the \$35 billion contract with the Air Force.

In December, Boeing and SPEEA settled contracts for 20,400 employees that included 20 percent wage increases over four years. The contract, covering engineers and technical workers in Washington, Oregon, California and Utah included additional 2 percent promotional money and retained the pension for new employees.

A local of the International Federation of Professional and Technical Engineers (IFPTE), SPEEA represents 24,600 aerospace professionals at Boeing, Spirit AeroSystems in Wichita, Triumph Composite Systems, Inc., in Spokane, Wash., and BAE Systems, Inc., in Irving, Texas.

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