

Boeing Jettisons Wichita Operations



Skilled, experienced workers at Boeing's Wichita facility will ensure that quality survives any ownership change. Local 834 members Troy Garver (lower left), Dan Briggs (lower right), Kay Townsend (upper left) and Rene Ornelas bring nearly 70 years of combined experience to their work.

In one of the most significant transactions in U.S. aerospace history, the Boeing Company sold its commercial aircraft operations in Wichita, KS to Toronto-based Onex

Corporation. The move ends months of speculation and confirms Boeing's desire to shrink the manufacturing side of its empire.

Nearly 6,000 IAM mem-

bers work at Boeing's Wichita facilities, building fuselages, engine casings, parts and cockpits for nearly every commercial jet in Boeing's fleet. Like Seattle, WA, Wichita provided jobs to generations of skilled Machinists who built the state's aerospace industry from the ground up.

Relatively new to the aerospace business, Onex Corporation differs from other buyout firms by investing in its acquisitions and growing them before reselling them. International President Tom Buffenbarger welcomed the prospects of additional investment in the Wichita facility.

"In a time when so many jobs and industries are leaving our shores, we're encouraged by Onex's willingness to invest in a showcase U.S. industry," said Buffenbarger.

New Contracts at Lockheed Martin

Hard bargaining for new contracts covering more than 6,000 IAM-represented employees at defense contractor Lockheed Martin concluded with new agreements for workers in Palmdale, CA; Sunnyvale, CA; Vandenberg AFB, CA and Cape Canaveral, FL.

"The agreement includes three general wage increases, pension improvements and a ratification bonus," said IAM Aerospace Coordinator John

Crowdis. "We placed a tremendous amount of attention on the top issues identified by our Lockheed members in bargaining surveys."

The most important issues identified by IAM members included improving pensions, medical benefits, job security and cost of living adjustments.

After extensive contract negotiations during the month of February, the Coordinated Bargaining

Committee reached a tentative agreement and unanimously recommended approval.

While IAM members in California and Florida voted to approve the agreements, members in Marietta, GA, Clarksburg, WV and Meridian, MS, turned down the tentative agreement and voted to authorize a strike. As this edition of the *IAM Journal* went to press, no new agreement had been reached.