

THE

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SPEEA Spotlight

Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace

IFPTE Local 2001, AFL-CIO & CLC

Greg Herzberg joined a crowd of motorcycle and car enthusiasts for SPEEA's third annual 'Cruise for the Cure,' raising money for cystic fibrosis. Herzberg, a SPEEA member, is shown here with his Victory, an American V-twin made by Polaris at the ride's end in Enumclaw, Wash..



Special section

Proposed bylaws changes pages 5-12

Good times at Wichita Fest

SPEEA Council Rep Donna Castaneda (at left) sprouts a balloon flower thanks to Stubbles the Clown at the Wichita Family Fest. At right, SPEEA Area Rep. Harold Evans, (left) and Bill Hartig, Midwest region vice president, are among the 100-plus at the event.



President's Corner

By Cynthia Cole, SPEEA President

The facts and data behind 'Agency Fee'

While reading the SPEEA website, have you ever come across the following and wondered what is behind these words?

Welcome to The Boeing Company! As you may know, your position is within a SPEEA bargaining unit. As such, you are required to meet the terms of the Company's "Agency Fee" agreement with the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA). This agreement ensures the union will have the resources to fulfill its legal obligations to collectively bargain for employees, enforce SPEEA contracts through contract administration, and represent you in the event you ever have a workplace grievance.

The words describing Agency Fee explain that SPEEA collects a fee to cover services provided from all represented employees in the Puget Sound bargaining units. I hear about some who read the contract and grumble about being "forced to pay dues." I have concluded they simply do not have enough facts and data to paint a complete picture.

When it started

Agency Fee came about in 2000, after the 40-day strike. From the time SPEEA came into existence, until then, only represented employees who signed up as members paid dues. This occurred, even though federal law obligated SPEEA, as it still does for all labor unions, to equally represent every employee in the bargaining unit. Regardless of membership status, if an employee is in the bargaining unit, the union provides representation.

Every vote counted

In 2000, SPEEA negotiated for – and The Boeing Company agreed – to honor a vote of *all* bargaining unit employees on Agency Fee. In other words, when this vote took place, SPEEA did more than meet the requirements of federal law, which requires union members to vote on contract offers from the employer. SPEEA asked for a provision in the contract that The Boeing Company would honor a vote of the *entire* bargaining unit on Agency Fee. The vote included all employees in the bargaining

unit, not just the dues-paying union members.

Sixty-six percent of the represented employees voted. The tally showed 64% of the Profs (engineers) and 77% of the Techs (technical workers) voted "yes" for Agency Fee. The number of cast ballots exceeded SPEEA's membership, meaning non-members did indeed vote.

Workers decided everyone should pay their fair share for union representation. In fact, Charles Boffarding, executive director, recalls a number of people who said, in effect, "I don't mind paying dues if everyone has to pay; however, I don't want to pay when others get it for free."

Since SPEEA is legally required to provide services for everyone in the bargaining unit, member or not, Agency Fee is quite fair.

That leads to this next statement on the SPEEA web site.

Your fellow employees worked for more than 55 years to secure this agreement with the Company. We hope you choose to respect and honor their commitment to increasing the wages and benefits of all bargaining-unit members by joining SPEEA as a dues paying member. The cost to you to join SPEEA or remain a non-member and pay the "Agency Fee" is exactly the same. However, members receive many additional benefits, including the ability to vote on the contracts and take advantage group discounts.

What can SPEEA do for you

The value of the Agency Fee vote can be found in the benefits provided to members. There are the obvious services such as contract negotiations to secure good wages and benefits, handling grievances, retention appeals, and arbitrations. Then, there is the assistance provided by SPEEA in resolving problems that are not necessarily contractual violations, such as resolving medical insurance problems, problems members encounter when they transfer to another job, disagreements between supervisors and members during work performance reviews.

SPEEA also provides members with salary data to aid in raises, and assists members wanting a job

reclassification or upgrade. I personally have been involved with SPEEA staff in these matters.

SPEEA also provides valuable information to members through SPEEA publications such as the monthly 'Spotlite,' bi-weekly 'SPEEA News' newsletter and our extensive website. SPEEA provides members with free workshops, and the ability to vote on their contract, elect their leaders, or change SPEEA's Constitution.

All of this for about one dollar a day!

Through our affiliations with other unions, SPEEA has access to resources that help us with our negotiations and our relationship with our members' employers. One resource we have sought is data on making the business case for companies to have a labor union in the workplace. Data shows unions are associated with higher productivity, lower employee turnover, improved workplace communication, and a better-trained workforce.

What do you think?

At the last Council Meeting, I encouraged Council Reps to ask SPEEA-represented employees to participate in an anonymous five-question survey to find out what their thoughts are about SPEEA. The above Agency Fee history is in response to some of the survey responses.

Council Reps may engage their Area Reps to help collect responses. SPEEA will use this survey to find out what different services members may want to see. We are also looking for ways you, the members, want to be more involved!

Index	Page
Council Reps hold meeting for Connexion members.....	2
Boeing pays out ShareValue	4
Proposed bylaw changes.....	5-12
Spirit salary charts	13
Labor history.....	14
Young professionals get help 'engineering' their careers	15
SPEEA, IAM team up to support Everett event	16



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