

# The Final Etch

October 3rd, 2024, Volume I, Issue V.

IUE-CWA Local 82162, (540) 562-9620, local82162.org

MEETING TIMES  
EVERY FIRST THURSDAY  
7:15am 3:15pm  
1:00pm 6:15pm

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## A Look at Labor Outside the Plant

### AT&T Southeast Strike Ends

*Retrieved from cwa-union.org*

Members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) have reached strong tentative agreements with AT&T Southeast and AT&T West for new union contracts. The contracts were bargained separately.

The agreement in the Southeast ends the **30 day strike – the longest telecommunications strike in the region’s history** – with union members across nine states pressuring the company to negotiate in good faith. CWA members will report to work for their scheduled shifts on Monday, September 16...

**“I believe in the power of unity, and the unity our members and retirees have shown during these contract negotiations has been outstanding and gave our bargaining teams the backing they needed to deliver strong contracts,”** said CWA President Claude Cummings Jr. **“I’m not just talking about AT&T members in the Southeast and West, although the determination of our striking AT&T Southeast members was remarkable. CWA members and retirees from every region and sector of our union mobilized in support of our bargaining teams, including by distributing flyers with information about the strike at AT&T Wireless stores.”**

The new contract in the Southeast covers **17,000 workers** technicians, customer service representatives and others who install, maintain and support AT&T’s residential and business wireline telecommunications network in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee. Wages and health care costs were key issues at the bargaining table, and **the five-year agreement includes across the board wage increases of 19.33%, with additional 3% increases for Wire Technicians and Utility Operations.** The health care agreement holds health care premiums steady in the first year and lowers them in the second and third years, with modest monthly increases in the final two years.

*CWA District 3 Vice President Richard Honeycutt released the following statement:*

“We are incredibly proud of our members and thank CWA members, retirees and allies across the country for the solidarity that has sustained us through these difficult negotiations. Their willingness to make sacrifices in order to win major improvements in their contract not just for themselves, but for future members is truly inspiring.



### Updates/Events from the Western Virginia Labor Federation

- All in the Western Virginia Area Labor Federation area have been affected by Hurricane Helene.
- State/Federal site to walk through what to do after a disaster
  - <https://www.ready.gov/recovering-disaster>
- Emergency SNAP benefits are available IF you are in a designated disaster area, irregardless of income.
  - <https://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/>

“Our bargaining team has worked tirelessly to negotiate a contract that provides significant wage increases that reflect the hard work and dedication of our union members and a medical plan that ensures that our members and their families have affordable, comprehensive healthcare services. For every member who has walked a picket line, spoken out for the contract they deserved, or joined their coworkers for a union action, you built this.”

## Can the Machinists Save Boeing from Its Management?

*Retrieved from [labornotes.org](https://labornotes.org), written by Jenny Brown of Labor Notes*

Boeing has increased its offer to striking Machinists, hoping to end a work stoppage that entered its eleventh day today. According to the [Seattle Times](#), the new proposal would raise wages 30 percent over four years, as opposed to 25 percent in the offer that workers rejected by 94.6 percent.

Mediated talks with Boeing broke off September 18, the union said, with nothing more scheduled. Then on Monday morning, the company announced a new offer in the press. Twelve hours later, the union responded that Boeing “has missed the mark with this proposal.”

In a scathing statement, the negotiating team noted that the company misled the press “by wrongfully stating that the union membership is required to vote on the their latest offer... They are trying to drive a wedge between members with this divisive strategy.”

According to news reports, the offer would restore the annual bonus and slightly increase the 401(k) match, but it does not restore the defined-benefit pension the company froze in 2016, dumping everyone into a 401(k). The signing bonus would be hiked from \$3,000 per worker to \$6,000.

Meanwhile, picket lines have settled into a routine at the massive assembly plants in Renton and Everett, Washington, the smaller Auburn fabrication plant and the Gresham, Oregon facility. The 32,000 striking Machinists are members of IAM Districts 751 in Washington and W24 in Oregon. The strike is costing the company \$100 million a day, Bloomberg estimated.

Workers are taking side gigs and living on savings. Strikers will receive \$250 a week from the union starting the third week on the strike, but will lose health coverage September 30 if they don't pay for a COBRA extension.

Boeing's 16,000 engineering staff, members of the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA), are contractually required to continue work during the strike, but they do not have to do Machinists' work unless directly ordered to, their union has advised. Members said there is little sign of that happening.

Some SPEEA members have been joining Machinists on the picket lines before and after work, and are posting workplace signs in support of the strike. When the company suggested it could furlough some engineers to save cash, SPEEA responded with a firm no, citing their contract.

### CROCODILE TEARS

Boeing management had pleaded with union members to consider the company's frail position and huge backlog of plane orders. But workers dismissed the company's scaremongering, voting 96 percent to strike, and walked out at midnight September 12.

While Boeing wailed that the strike may cause mortal wounds to the company, the Machinists union has for decades been fighting against the company's self-wounding practices:

-rampant outsourcing, undermining of quality inspections, moving work to non-union shops, and hollowing out what used to be a coveted family-sustaining job.

Company policies have resulted in the loss of experienced workers, production delays, mismatched and shoddy parts, and the disastrous quality lapses that led to an Alaska Airlines door plug blowout in January.

### QUALITY INSPECTIONS CUT

It was the union that was originally responsible for pushing the separation of quality inspection from production pressures, said Steve Cabana, a quality assurance inspector for 13 years. “Having quality separate in the supervisory chain is the only way quality can have any teeth,” he said. “I can look at a process and stop it.”

This is not true at vendors the company buys parts from, Cabana said, where they have “the same management system for manufacturing and quality.”

“That's how the company figured it could save money by outsourcing, because other people didn't have the same rigorous standards,” Cabana said.

“It's a fragile network of suppliers who honestly aren't compensated all that well for the work that they do,” said Mylo Lang, an apprentice machinist at Auburn with six years at the company. “They've really been squeezing them, in fact, over the years.”

In Boeing's own plants, the company has tried to slash inspections, too...

**Read more at: <https://labornotes.org/2024/09/can-machinists-save-boeing-its-management>**

*Members of the Newsletter Committee:*

*Brian King, Trey Brown, Johnathan Dogan, and Brian Jefferson*