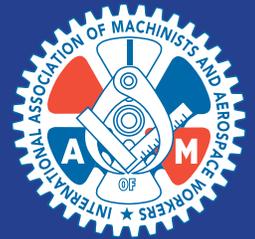


Eastern Washington Machinists News



Volume 2, No. 1 - Feb.-Mar 2010

Members Keep Aging U.S.A.F. Tankers Aloft

We have all heard about the need to replace the aging Air Force Tankers, but few realize we currently represent members who are critical to the existing KC-135 refueling tankers. Working for FlightSafety Services at Fairchild Air Force Base in Spokane, we have skilled instructors and technicians who provide instruction, support and maintenance services to the flight simulators for the KC-135R Air Force tanker aircraft. Their positions are essential to keep the fleet of KC-135 tankers in the air and a well-trained flight crew ready and available.

These specialized experts at Fairchild work as Simulator Maintenance Technicians and Pilot Instructors and utilize sophisticated full flight simulators to train flight crews on all aspects of flying for the KC-135s. Our members perform scheduled and unscheduled maintenance on simulators, computers and other Aircrew Training System (ATS) equipment, as well as providing customer support.

This requires the pilots to know all as-



Tim Weber, a pilot instructor for the KC-135's, sets up challenging scenarios in the flight simulators to ensure Air Force pilots are prepared to fly missions and deal with nearly every potential encounter possible.

pects of the plane and how it will handle in every potential situation. In fact, just to qualify as a Pilot Instructor, the original contract required a minimum of 8 years flying experience, 5 military experience and 2 years as a KC-135 instructor.

Technicians must have detailed working knowledge of all aircraft systems to en-

able them to operate, maintain, identify and repair any and all aircraft simulator related malfunctions. Systems include: Avionics, Motion Hydraulics, Instruments, Computers, Visual Systems, Audio Systems, Linkage, Lighting, Communications, Fuel Management, Flight Management,

Continued on page 5

751 Members Keep Washington Clean

Ever wonder what happens to your trash once it leaves your curb or is deposited at a transfer station? Chances are one of our Machinists Union members in Eastern Washington will handle it at some point in the disposal process.

While few think about the importance of

the proper disposal of waste, our members at the Roosevelt Landfill and Tri-County Disposal make it their job and understand the impact trash has on our environment. Both groups work for a subsidiary of Allied Waste; however, they perform very different but vital functions.

Roosevelt Landfill

Our members travel a minimum of 30 miles to work at the Roosevelt Regional Landfill, which stretches for miles below the arid hills of Klickitat County. The natural geology of the region allowed the vast facility to be permitted to a capacity of 250 million tons of waste over at least 75 years. The landfill opened in 1991, and employees there voted for Machinists Union representation in 1999.

With 126 Machinists Union members, it is one of the largest employers in Klickitat County and also one of the "greenest."



Garry Shane is one of 15 members at Tri-County Disposal who handle all waste for Klickitat County.

Members not only dispose of waste, but ensure the methane gas created by the decomposing trash is turned into electricity.

Our skilled members perform a variety of jobs. They run the intermodal rails, operate compactors and push cats, create and

Continued on page 6



At the Roosevelt Landfill members process 7,500 tons of waste each day from Washington, Oregon and Alaska – 97 percent arrives by railcar.

Lee & Eastes Keep Tank Trucks Rolling

At Lee & Eastes Tank Lines in Pasco, four Machinists Union members diligently work to repair and maintain hundreds of trucks, trailers and tankers each year.

While the facility has changed names several times over the years, what has remained constant is representation by the Machinists Union. Since the 1960's, the Machinists Union has been the voice in collective bargaining for these workers and has helped provide continuity even through employer's name changes (most recently from Motor Freight Services in 2005).

Union Steward Steve Ely is also a part of that long-term stability. He has worked there for almost 24 years.

"I enjoy the variety of work. We have a lot of fabrication, service work and preventive maintenance. We are a one-stop shop that can do everything from welding and fabrication to brake jobs, oil changes,



IAM members at Lee & Eastes repair and maintain hundreds of trucks, trailers and tankers each year. L to R: Steve Ely, Dale Powell, IAM Staff Assistant Ken Howard, Kory Billington, and Don Ambts.

and lubing trucks," Steve stated. "Over the years, the repair of tanks has also grown into a sizeable work package."

Maintaining the trucks owned by Lee & Eastes accounts for only part of the work. Other companies have recognized the skilled mechanics and rely on our members there to keep their trucks, trailers and tankers in top-running condition.

"It has been amazing this winter," added Steve "We have been really busy despite the downturn in the economy. Our workload hasn't really been affected. If we lose a customer for some reason, there seems

to be others right there to bring in new work. It has meant steady employment."

Steve has represented the members as Union Steward since 2004. He understands that the benefits package and good wages are a direct result of Union representation.

Most important at Lee & Eastes, there is a good working relationship between Company and Union. This atmosphere of mutual respect has resulted in loyal employees, return customers, and hard work on the part of everyone to ensure the company's success.



Steward Steve Ely prepares to repair a tanker.

Local Lodge Officers Accept the Oath of Office

Photo right: L to R: Business Rep Steve Warren administers the oath of office to Local 1123 officers: Jim O'Brien, Barry Wright, Fred McNeil, Tie Morrison, Bailey Olin, Adam Focht, Elmer Wall and Fred Willsey.



Local 86 President Jeff Jones (l) administers the oath of office while Mike Blashill (outgoing Sec-Treas) observes. Taking the oath L to R: Pete Hedemark, Gary Swartz, Terry Frei, Dale Ronquille, and Andy Cashion (outgoing Rec. Sec).



Staff Assistant Ken Howard (r) administers the oath of office to Local 1951 officer Marty Uber (l) and Craig Smoot.

Mechanics Ensure Central Pre-Mix Keeps Rolling

In Eastern Washington, less than a dozen members are tasked with keeping the heavy equipment for Central Pre-Mix Concrete in top running condition. When you realize that this unit provides ready-mix concrete, aggregate mining operations, and concrete for heavy construction – having well-maintained equipment is critical to the successful operation of the company.

Eight of these skilled mechanics work at the company's Sullivan Road facility, and one works at the Pasco location. Using their craftsman skills as diesel mechanics, they service and repair various equipment, loaders, bulldozers, mixer and dump trucks – to keep things moving for Central Pre-Mix.

In addition, these members occasionally repair and service equipment from other Central Pre-Mix plants that don't have the capabilities of the Spokane operation.

Central Pre-Mix has a long history in Eastern Washington – one that our members at this facility are proud to be

a part of. While Central Pre-Mix originally opened its doors in 1930, employees opted for Machinists Union representation in the early 1960's – establishing another long-standing relationship.

Our members at Central Pre-Mix are experts in their fields – bringing either years of work experience or completing apprenticeships to offer journeyman level service.

Union Steward Casey Streeter has 10 years at Central and completed his diesel mechanic apprenticeship in 2005. Like his co-workers, he appreciates the good-working relationship with management, which is why so many members remain at the plant for decades.

The members' immediate foreman is a working foreman who is in the bargaining unit. In addition, the equipment manager is a former mechanic who was promoted from the bargaining unit. This understanding of the trade and knowing what is required has resulted in a good relationship with management and a mutual appreciation and respect.

"There is not a lot of turnover here. While I have 10 years at Central Pre-Mix, the next guy above me has 15 plus years, above him it goes to 25 plus years, and we just had two members with over 30



Terry Hirsch (r) works at the Pasco facility and discusses an issue with the engine.

Below: Casey Streeter (l) and Kevin Charles work on one of the trucks.



Anthony Glenn works on one of the engines.

years each retire," stated Streeter.

"With the downturn in the current economy, the shop is trying to catch up on project work and big projects," stated Streeter. The Union contract provides job security for the members.

Their current three-year contract is set to expire June 30.

Steward Casey Streeter is working with Business Rep Steve Warren to put the finishing touches on the contract survey so members can prioritize issues for the upcoming negotiations.



Union Secures Federal Aid for Pexco Workers

IAM-represented workers at Pexco in Union Gap aren't facing any immediate layoffs. But if their company's new owners – New York-based private equity fund Saw Mill Capital – should decide to cut jobs in the future and ship more of their work south to Mexico, the Pexco workers will be able to draw on a wide range of job-retraining benefits through Trade Act assistance, thanks to pro-active work done by District 751 and the Washington State Labor Council.

"It'll be the best-possible case in the

worst-possible scenario," said Business Rep Steve Warren.

District 751 represents 118 workers at Pexco, which was known as Filtrona when they voted to join the Union back in 2007. The company was later sold to the new owners, who renamed it in 2009. Members there make a range of extruded plastic parts for the automotive and aerospace industries.

The new owners have moved a portion of the work from Yakima to another plant the company owns in Mexico, Warren said. So far,

there hasn't been enough work transferred to trigger widespread layoffs – only one person has lost their job, Warren said.

But with the potential existing for more work to be offloaded, District 751 was able to get workers at Pexco pre-qualified for benefits under the federal Trade Adjustment Act. The ruling extends the benefits to all workers at the plant – including contract workers from a temporary services agency and non-Union Pexco employees.

Continued on page 4

Surveying the Situation at Triumph Composite Systems

Machinists Union members working at Triumph Composite Systems in Spokane are skilled workers who play a vital role in every Boeing aircraft.

Our members in Spokane build and assemble floor panels, ducts, flight deck interiors and a large variety of components for all Boeing aircraft (including the 787), as well as aftermarket floor panels for Airbus planes.

Members at Triumph Composite Systems are already thinking about their upcoming contract negotiations – since the current contract

expires at midnight on June 3.

Members at the Spokane plant selected Jerry Womble to be their shop floor representative at the bargaining table – a role that Business Rep Steve Warren filled three years ago. In the 2010 negotiations, Warren will again represent the members at the bargaining table, along with District President Tom Wroblewski and other skilled aerospace negotiators from the IAM.

Members are currently filling out the first round of surveys. The surveys provide an avenue for input from all members and will help prioritize the issues for the upcoming bargaining sessions.



Mark Quick prepares floor panels for shipping.



Above: Anatolly Tsiribko (l) and Thanh Nguyen build a floor panel.



Photo left: Business Rep Steve Warren (r) discuss issues with Sondra Bailey.



L to R: Erin Blashill, Lance Hoopes, Dale Ronquille, Bob Six, Business Rep Steve Warren and John Warren discuss upcoming negotiations.



John Vargas (l) and Jeff Ayers prepare rotomolds for ducts.

Union Secures Federal Aid for Pexco Workers

Continued on page 3

Anyone laid off between Nov. 23, 2008, and Dec. 29, 2011, will be able to apply for them.

The Act provides a broad range of federal aid, including cash for workers to enroll in up to two years of training for new jobs, along with up to 156 weeks of benefits similar to unemployment insurance and a tax credit that covers 80 percent of their health insurance premiums while they're retraining.

Pexco is one of four Eastern Washington companies that 751 petitioned the Labor Department for aid in the event of layoffs. The Pexco application was the first to be ruled on.

That's largely because management at the Pexco plant was cooperative in the process, Warren said. "They were very open to getting these benefits for their workers and provided us with everything we needed."

District 751 is going to do all it can to keep the work in Yakima, District President Tom Wroblewski said. But getting the Trade Adjustment Act benefits pre-approved for members at Pexco and the other Eastern Washington companies will provide "a substantial safety net" for workers whose companies insist on sending American jobs overseas.



Members at Pexco hear about TAA benefits available if they get laidoff



Members at Flight Safety Services at Fairchild AFB Keep Aging Tankers Aloft

Continued from page 1
and more.

To do so they must be educated on:

- Electrical and mechanical theory.
- Operating principals of digital and analog computers.
- Component level testing and repair ATS field replaceable units.

“Our focus is training crews and keeping them in the air. We work very hard to ensure we never lose a mission,” stated Tim Weber, Pilot Instructor. “We can simulate nearly every possible scenario so when they actually fly the plane, the crews are already familiar with the base and mission, and hopefully, they have encountered any potential problem that could occur and even some they will probably never face.”

In 2007, a nationwide organizing ef-



Pete Armstrong and Ray Ebach repair electronic panels on the KC-135 simulator.

fort brought Machinists Union representation to FlightSafety Services employees at 11 locations, including the workers at Fairchild.

The workers at Fairchild FlightSafety looked to the Union for help when their wages were stagnant and falling behind market rates. Their wages were suffering because they were being compared to typical electronic technician jobs rather than a position with comparable responsibilities and skills. The electronic technician is only a small part of what they do. Basically, there were no other positions east of the Cascades that were comparable to their responsibilities.

Previously, Fairchild simulator main-

tenance technicians received a 3 cents an hour increase at the same time pilot simulator instructors received a \$5 per hour increase. This was one of many reasons they united together to get Union representation to ensure they had a voice in their future.

Although this group is relatively new to the Union, these members have experienced first-hand the benefits of Union representation. After the Machinists Union negotiated a nationwide contract in October 2007, members at Fairchild in Spokane saw a first year wage increase that averaged \$7.04 per person and a three-year average increase of \$9.59. In addition, they received 3 percent of their pay in the form of a FlexBenefit, which can be used to purchase the benefits of their choice - health care, retirement, extra vacation or added cash in their checks.

Since these workers are covered by the Service Contract Act, Machinists Union representation is the smart way to go. Even when the contract is paying “all that the law requires,” the IAM can often get more for the workers. The same is true for fringe benefits, insurance and retirement provisions that the contractor may otherwise not have to offer. Finally under the Service Contract Act, if you’re represented by the union and the contractor changes, you have continuity and job security – making Union Yes the right decision.

“The Union helped us out a great deal



Richard Doyen (l) explains repairs to the flight simulator to Business Rep Steve Warren.

with the wage disparity so we are now more inline with simulator personnel throughout the West Coast,” said Union Steward Jim Kurzhal.

The group is currently preparing to begin negotiations for a second contract. Members met with Union leaders in late February to provide input, complete surveys and take a preliminary strike sanction vote. Demonstrating solidarity, the group delivered a 100 percent strike sanction vote showing confidence in their negotiators.

Union Steward Jim Kurzhal will be the voice of Fairchild at the nationwide negotiations, along with Business Rep Steve Warren, and he looks forward to his role in the negotiations.

So the next time you wonder how the aging KC-135s keep flying, you’ll know it is in part thanks to the training provided to our military from our members at FlightSafety Services.



Members at FlightSafety voted 100% to grant strike sanction on Feb. 22. L to R: Ray Ebach, Mike Zerba, Jim Kurzhal, Scott Greenwood, and Richard Doyen.

Members Keep Washington Clean at Roosevelt Landfill and Tri-County Disposal

Continued from page 1

maintain landfill roads, repair containers, and perform heavy equipment maintenance and trailer chassis repair including welding. They serve as truck mechanics, truck drivers, equipment operators, laborers, mechanics and environmental technicians. Each day the facility processes 7,500 tons of waste from Washington, Oregon, Alaska and Canada. There is even a proposal to have them process waste from Hawaii.

About 97 percent of the waste arrives by rail with the remainder coming in by truck. On average, these members handle 2 to 2.5 miles of railcars per day, six days a week – with some of the trains having up to 8,000 feet of railcars. Roosevelt is one of the 10 largest landfills and the largest waste-by-rail operation in the U.S.

During the day the 200-foot working face of the landfill is the only exposed area. Members unload railcars into intermodal transports, which carry and dump the waste into the disposal site, which is covered each night.

A combination of geo-membrane and topsoil will be used to close the landfill when it reaches capacity years from now. Extensive monitoring systems will be kept operating for 30 years past the closure of the site. Upon closure, the entire site can be returned to agricultural use – again demonstrating the “green” effort at the facility.

Thanks to efforts by our members not even garbage goes to waste. Leachate and methane gas are collected throughout the landfill by a system of pipes, which were installed and maintained by our members. The leachate is re-circulated through the landfill prompting rapid decomposition of waste and accelerating methane production. The methane gas is used to create electrical power – leading the way in energy recovery.

Current methane production supports the



Photo left: Closeup of disposal site. Members process 7,500 tons of waste per day.

Photo below: Shows above the disposal site, which must be covered each night



Above: Roosevelt chief Steward Jerry Mickelson.

generation of 10 megawatts of electricity. The landfill may eventually generate 52 megawatts of electricity – enough power for roughly 30,000 homes!

Jerry Mickelson, who serves as Chief Steward, recognizes the value in a Union contract. Before coming to work at the landfill, he served as union president for workers at the nearby aluminum plant before it closed.

“The Union gets us good wages and benefits and keeps us working as long as we abide by the Company policy,” Jerry stated. “With a Union, the Company can’t just get rid of us on a whim or because they don’t like us. Unions are what built our country and the middle class.”

Tri-County Disposal

Our members at the Roosevelt Landfill aren’t the only ones who turn an impressive volume of waste each day. The 15 members working at Tri-County Disposal (another subsidiary of Allied Waste) collect garbage and recycling from most of the 19,000 residents and businesses throughout Klickitat County. Keep in mind Klickitat County is a long narrow county covering a lot of ground, which stretches across miles of south-Central Washington along the northern banks of the Columbia River – often making pickups miles apart.

To stay on top of the routes, the group works as a team – assessing the workload and making adjustments and reorganizing routes to increase efficiency. With minimal oversight, the group must be self-motivated.

With so many miles to cover and just seven drivers and three helpers, they are constant-

ly moving. They have one recycling route that services the entire county. In addition, our members at Tri-County run three waste transfer stations located in Goldendale, BZ Corners, and Dallesport, which are open five or six days a week depending on the season. From the transfer stations, the trash must be transported to the Roosevelt Regional Landfill for final disposal. Two members serve as “jack of all trades” – filling in where needed, cutting up appliances for recycling and maintaining the transfer stations. When someone takes a day off, they pull together to seamlessly get the job done so service is uninterrupted.

Several members bring decades of experience to their position, which is a testament to the pay and benefits secured.

Union Steward Garry Shane, who has been working in the same area since 1981, noted, “Management trusts the workforce and gives us input into our work assignments. By empowering us, we are more motivated and want to ensure the job is done. Everyone works together well – making it a good job – one that people stay at for years.”

Members at Tri-County Disposal voted to have Machinists Union representation in 2002 after observing that workers at the landfill secured a better deal with a collective bargaining agreement. It is a decision they still stand by today. In fact, members at Tri-County Disposal last fall unanimously ratified a new contract that included 3 percent annual raises over the next three years – demonstrating their commitment and teamwork as both employees and Union members.



Ed Wright working at one of the transfer stations.