

# The Leading Edge



News for Boeing  
South Carolina Employees



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## Front Line Workers Offer Key to Success



The IAM represents production employees building General Electric jet engines in Evendale, OH (left), Boeing jets in St. Louis (middle), the Bombardier Learjet in Wichita (right), and more.

Nobody knows a Harley better than the production technician who works with the bike's frames and fenders.

Nobody knows a General Electric jet engine better than the machinist who handles the engine's compressor and turbine every single day.

It's no different at Boeing in North Charleston, where the 787 Dreamliner is being built. Or, Boeing in Seattle or St. Louis, for that matter.

It's front line workers who are spending a minimum of 40 hours every week constructing and deconstructing these sophisticated, technologically-advanced products. And they know the process inside and out.

A Union provides these workers with multiple avenues to place their stamp on their employer's success.

It can be seen through production employees whose Union contract empowers them to speak freely about work processes without fear of retaliation.

It can be seen in apprenticeship programs, where Union members help guide both the on-the-job training and classroom curriculum that sets their employer up with a highly-skilled workforce.

It can be seen through contract language that spells out job reclassification, continuing education and advancement opportunities.

The IAM understands this. Our top priority is making sure our members are put in the best possible position to succeed.

More and more companies have come to realize this as well. They have learned it's their workers –not shareholders and politicians – that hold the key to their success. To help facilitate this process, the IAM created a High Performance Work Organization Partnerships (HPWO) program.

With an eye towards tapping the expertise of front line workers, the HPWO process organizes workers into job classification-based Natural Work Groups (NWG) that meet monthly to identify problems and forge solutions that mutually benefit the workers and the company.

Companies who have partnered with the IAM on HPWO programs include:

- **Harley-Davidson**
- **Triumph**
- **Alcoa**
- **TitanX**
- **Kenyon College**

“The fact that we went from a discussion of outsourcing, to adding a position in the trades, it's really been a 180-degree turn in terms of how we thought about operating within that department,” said Mark Kohlman, chief business officer at Kenyon College, at a recent National Employment Law Project conference. “I'm encouraged about the relationship the college has with its employees, the relationship that we have now with both unions, and I'm really excited about keeping this going and moving it forward.”

# Navigating the NLRB Election Process

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The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) process that allows non-union workers the opportunity to gain representation is a surprisingly simple process.

It goes like this: Through authorization cards, workers demonstrate a significant showing of interest (the law says 30%). The IAM files with the NLRB for a secret-ballot election and if a majority of workers at the plant vote YES for the Union, then the IAM is certified as the official bargaining representative.

It's a straightforward process, but the company often attempts to muddy the waters by spreading false rumors, seeking to delay the secret-ballot election, and filing bogus objections.

The following are key facts to keep in mind when it comes to your NLRB election and authorization cards:

- **A person who signs an authorization card is not joining the union.** Rather, they are demonstrating their interest in union representation.
- **If you sign an authorization card, the company will not see it.** It is against federal law for a NLRB agent to share cards with the company.
- **The secret-ballot election is, well, secret.** The NLRB ensures your vote is confidential in order to ensure you are not discriminated against by management.
- **The NLRB typically conducts elections at the worksite at times that ensure all workers have the opportunity to vote.**

Learn more at [www.nlr.gov](http://www.nlr.gov).

## Unions 101: The Contract

A union job means the guarantee of a contract. A contract is a legally binding and enforceable document which establishes “wages, hours and terms of conditions of work.” There are currently more than 4,400 contracts in effect between the IAM and various employers. A typical contract secures such things as:

**Raises, vacations and holidays;  
Medical, dental and vision coverage;  
Retirement plans;  
Shift differentials; and  
Transfer and promotion rights.**

As an IAM member, you elect the union committee that negotiates the contract and vote to approve or reject any proposed agreement. Through a survey conducted prior to negotiations, you will also be able to make it known which issues are of most concern to you. Once the contract is ratified, it will guide policy at your worksite—and your worksite alone. What you ratify has no bearing on Boeing's Washington operations and vice versa.

## IAM Launches Educational Website



In order to get accurate information to Boeing South Carolina employees as quickly as possible, the IAM has launched [boeingworkers.com](http://boeingworkers.com). To learn more about the IAM and get the real facts about any rumors circulating in the shop, visit the website at [boeingworkers.com](http://boeingworkers.com).

## Additional Links

**Employee Rights:** [http://www.dol.gov/olms/regs/compliance/EmployeeRightsPoster11x17\\_Final.pdf](http://www.dol.gov/olms/regs/compliance/EmployeeRightsPoster11x17_Final.pdf)

**GoIAM:** [www.goiam.org](http://www.goiam.org)

**Machinists Union Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/MachinistsUnion>

**AFL-CIO:** [www.aflcio.org](http://www.aflcio.org)

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