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Monday, December 2, 2002

# United, mechanics union meet to keep struggling airline aflor

CHICAGO (AP) — Officials of United Airlines and its mechanics union were meeting behind closed doors Sunday in renewed efforts to find a way to keep the nation's No. 2 air carrier out of bankruptcy.

The mechanics last week rejected a proposed package of steep wage and benefit cuts that United says are necessary if it is to land a \$1.8 billion federal loan guarantee that would keep it out of Chapter 11 bankruptcy court proceedings.

United spokesman Jeff Green confirmed the Sunday meeting but said the airline would not discuss any aspects of the talks, including their location or duration. He said he couldn't predict whether the airline would have any announcement Sunday.

Machinists union representa tives did not respond to repeated calls seeking comment.

The union was on the verge of striking in the spring before it agreed to a sweetened contract offer that included the mechanics' first raise since 1994. The tive pay under that deal.

The meeting came a day after the airline's 24,000 flight atten-

Simply put, every benefit we currently enjoy can be lost all at the stroke of a judge's pen.

> - Randy Canale union member

dants agreed to \$412 million in wage concessions. However, that deal and other cost-cutting agreements accepted United's pilots and other employee groups will expire Dec. 31 unless the mechanics

United is seeking \$5.2 billion in companywide labor cuts over 5 1/2 years. The mechanics' proposed share is believed to be \$600 million to \$700 million.

A bankruptcy would be unlikely to have any immediate effect on passengers. United has said it will continue flying its normal schedule, as US Airways has been doing since its Chapter 11 filing in August.

The cash-strapped airline had

due Monday, althou could be pushed back to 16. Its cash reserve is beli be around \$1 billion and ly to run out this winter

THE BATTALI

United says it mus Ioans. United has been to reverse multimil losses each day. It has workers because of the economy and sharply

A bankruptcy coun even more severely than

workers criticized the n to working with United cutting is "so undeniab

Simply put, every the stroke of a judge's Randy Canale wrote in to District 141 members.

## Former home of Enron CFO

HOUSTON (AP) - The Houston Fire Department was investigating a fire at the threestory, 11,493-square-foot River Oaks mansion that former Enron Chief Financial Officer Andrew Fastow once owned.

The house, which was sold to another energy company official for \$3.9 million in October, caught fire early Sunday.

"It is under investigation," said Houston Fire Department spokesman Jay Evans. "That is all we are going to say about it at this time.

Firefighters received the call about 3 a.m. Evans described the fire as "very small" and said it was contained in the front portion of the house, which federal prosecutors have accused Fastow of building with laundered money.

The proceeds of the sale to Thomas CFO of Hilcorp Energy, and his wife, Laur be turned over to the U.S. Marshal's Service a judge rules on whether the money was Hook did not immediately return a pho

sage left Sunday by The Associated Press \$300,000 of work remained on the house w couple purchased it. It was not immediate whether they had moved into the home.

Video shot by KPRC-TV showed a large can near the front door of the home as finding worked to extinguish the blaze. Evans delin comment on the report.

Fastow spokesman Gordon Andrewald the Fastows were not in Houston Sunda

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College Football Bowl Challenge Dec. 9-17

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nance workers for the semester break and the spring semester Applications available in room 202.

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