

# Airline debate continues

By David Koenig  
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

FORT WORTH, Texas — American Airlines chairman and chief executive Donald J. Carty says he thought employees would admire his plan to retain key executives, but the furor over management perks has left American close to filing for bankruptcy.

On Monday, the second of American's three main unions said it would hold a new election on the company's plan for cutting labor costs by \$1.8 billion a year. The Transport Workers Union joined the Association of Professional Flight Attendants in calling for another vote, increasing the possibility that the deal will be rejected. The third big union, representing American's pilots, said its board would meet in emergency session Tuesday.

All three unions voted last week to approve the concessions but were outraged to learn of executive perks while their own members were approving big pay and benefit cuts. American

has vowed to file for bankruptcy protection if any of the unions reject the cuts.

Before the transport workers' announcement, investors showed their concern by bidding down shares of American Airlines' parent, AMR Corp.

**"All of our employees ... did what was necessary to help avoid bankruptcy, and then I stumbled."**

— Donald J. Carty  
American Airlines chairman

Last year, the AMR board approved bonuses for seven executives if they stayed at the company through January 2005 and \$41 million in payments to a pension trust for 45 executives that would be protected in bankruptcy, just like other employees' pensions.

The company has dropped the bonuses, not the pension funding.

Carty defended the payments as necessary to keep senior executives and said he thought the retention plan would win praise as more modest than plans at other airlines.

The benefits were approved last year but only publicly disclosed last week, on the same day that employees were scheduled to finish voting on the concession deals.

Carty said the late disclosure in a mandatory securities filing was a mistake. He said he didn't release details sooner because he feared the public would think there was a mass exodus of senior officials from the company. Then there was another delay this month while the company's outside auditors reviewed tax treatment of the provisions, he said.

"All of our employees, union and nonunion alike, did what was necessary to help avoid bankruptcy, and then I stumbled," Carty said.

Union leaders said it was unclear whether Carty's apology would prevent unions from reversing their earlier approval to head off bankruptcy.

# Lockheed machinists get benefits

FORT WORTH, Texas (AP)—The union striking for better wages and relief from high medical insurance and prescription drug costs at Lockheed Martin Aeronautics Co. says new machinists at the plant which manufactures fighter jets will qualify for strike benefits.

About 450 employees at Lockheed Martin Corp.'s North Texas aircraft manufacturing plant were approved for benefits of the International Association of Machinists even though they haven't yet worked the three months required by association bylaws to become eligible for such pay, the union's president said Monday.

Pat Lane, president of IAM Local 776, told the Fort Worth Star-Telegram that "this will help the solidarity of the union. There were quite a few new hires who could have fallen between the cracks but the union will take care of them."

The strike began April 14 after about 4,000 IAM members voted against a proposed contract

with wage increases that some union members said would be sharply cut by higher health care costs.

One provision was greater co-payments on prescription drugs by workers.

Union leaders and managers reported no negotiations or contacts on Monday. A federal mediator has been in contact with the opposite sides, but no sessions have been scheduled.

Striking employees at Lockheed Martin will miss their first paycheck Friday. Workers under union rules can receive the \$125 weekly strike pay after a walkout has lasted three weeks, IAM President Tom Buffenbarger wrote union members.

Bethesda, Md.-based Lockheed Martin's Fort Worth plant, the second largest employer in the Dallas-Fort Worth area, will build the Polish government 48 F-16 jet fighters for \$3.5 billion, the biggest defense contract by a former Soviet bloc country since the end of the Cold War, it was announced on Friday.

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