

## Onex brings in help for Boeing union talks

BY MOLLY MCMILLIN

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Onex Corp. has hired an outside firm -- **the Hutchison Group** -- to help it negotiate contracts with Boeing's labor unions.

Onex also has added former U.S. Rep. Richard Gephardt of Missouri to its team of advisors.

In his former role as a congressman and House minority leader, Gephardt has "helped save thousands of jobs," Onex managing director Seth Mersky said in a release.

Gephardt's experience will be helpful as Onex transitions the Boeing Wichita and Tulsa commercial operations to an independent business, Mersky said.

"He's got real credibility with organized labor," said Onex managing director Nigel Wright.

Onex has not reached an agreement with any of Boeing's Wichita-based unions. A vote on an offer Onex made to members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers was canceled earlier this week so that Onex could resume negotiations. Union leaders had recommended members reject the offer.

The Machinists union, meanwhile, has called Onex's proposal for a five-year agreement "unacceptable."

The Machinists and the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace, Boeing's second largest union, resume talks with Onex next week.

**The Hutchison Group's Cameron Hutchison has helped companies restructure their labor costs and develop strategies during mergers, acquisitions, divestitures and other business restructuring, according to information on the company's Web site.**

**Hutchison has worked for a number of companies, including Boeing. As a senior executive of Sundstrand Corp., he worked for former Boeing president Harry Stonecipher.**

Boeing, meanwhile, told employees Friday that their May 13 layoff date may be extended.

In March, thousands of Boeing workers received 60-day layoff notices to help Onex prepare to buy Boeing's commercial business here. The notices were distributed to inform employees that their employment with Boeing could terminate as early as May 13.

If an extension is needed, employees will be notified in an e-mail, according to a memo sent to employees this week.

Wright said Friday that he doesn't expect the deal with Boeing to close until June.