



*Associated Press*

## **Wheeling-Pittsburgh to meet with union**

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WHEELING, W.Va. (AP) - Steel maker Wheeling-Pittsburgh Corp. on Monday said it plans to meet with the United Steel Workers Union to discuss a proposed merger with Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional, Brazil's largest steel producer.

Last week, the union rejected a merger with Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional and instead endorsed a takeover of Wheeling-Pittsburgh by Esmark Inc., a privately held steel service center in Chicago Heights, Ill. David McCall, District 1 director for the union, said his membership would also file a grievance over alleged violations of the current contract, which allows the union to make a competing offer.

Wheeling-Pittsburgh Chairman and Chief Executive James G. Bradley said on Monday that the company complied "scrupulously" with the contract and reiterated that the Esmark takeover does not present the same strategic advantages as a merger with Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional.

"Esmark is a steel distributor with a limited track record and little depth in steel production, which has made a proposal that offers no clear commercial benefit to the company," Bradley said in a letter to McCall that was to be delivered prior to Monday's meeting.

The showdown for Wheeling-Pittsburgh, which has survived two bankruptcies with the help of union concessions, will culminate at its annual meeting in Pittsburgh on Nov. 17, when shareholders will vote on the two proposals and two new boards of directors.

Shares of Wheeling-Pittsburgh fell 11 cents to \$17.80 in morning trading on the Nasdaq. Shares of Companhia Siderúrgica Nacional lost 33 cents to \$31.60 on the New York Stock Exchange.