

FREEP: New GM CEO: I'll work with the UAW
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(Note: An earlier version of this story was posted as late-breaking news Thursday afternoon.)

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General Motors CEO Dan Akerson chose the UAW for the topic of his first companywide message, saying he believes in cooperating with the group.

Others have suggested the union could prove a challenge for the sacrifice-minded boss.

"Coming from a union family, I know on a very personal level the good things that unions can do," Akerson said Thursday in a note to employees in honor of Labor Day on Monday.

The CEO said he recently met with UAW President Bob King and Vice President Joe Ashton, who is the union's lead GM negotiator.

"We agreed that, while we will not always see eye to eye on everything, GM will succeed to the extent that management and labor work together," Akerson said in the note, obtained by the Free Press. A GM spokesman confirmed the note's authenticity on the condition of anonymity.

Akerson, GM's fourth CEO since 2009, took over Wednesday after former CEO Ed Whitacre said he didn't plan to stay long past GM's initial public offering, planned for late this year.

Some who know Akerson have said he may have difficulty working with the UAW, which will negotiate a new contract with GM next year and may ask to restore losses it agreed to ahead of GM's bankruptcy.

Akerson, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate, is

known for urging subordinates to stop complaining and start working.

"There will always be more hard work ahead of us," he said in the note, "but because of your dedication, I have great optimism for GM's future."