I t’s an unfortunate reality that we are frequently un- 
aware of the many resources available to us through ALPA 
until we are confronted with situations that make us truly 
thankful they’re there. The ALPA Emergency Relief Fund 
(AERF) is a perfect example. Many of our pilots are prob-
ably unaware that this important member resource 
even exists, and yet each of us is just one catastrophic 
event away from needing it.

In late June, Calgary and 
parts of southern Alberta 
were deluged with heavy 
rainfall and record floods that 
destroyed homes and busi-
nesses and claimed the lives 
of four people. The provincial 
government later reported 
that approximately 55,000 
square kilometers were di-
rectly affected by the flooding 
and that more than 100,000 
people were forced out of 
more than 10,000 homes. 
I remember seeing vivid 
pictures of the devastation on 
the evening news.

Capt. Chris Kampen, chair-
man of the Canadian North 
Master Executive Council 
(MEC), immediately called 
me to get some information 
for his members about AERF 
and to see what he could do 
to expedite assistance. The 
Canadian North MEC then 
contacted potentially affected 
pilots to make sure they knew 
that this benefit is available.

Fortunately, most of the 
Canadian North pilots and 
other ALPA members in and 
around Calgary didn’t need 
aid, but Kampen assured us 
that the pilots who did greatly 
appreciated the support they 
received—and that gave the 
MEC an idea.

The Canadian North pilots 
were already scheduled to 
have a Family Awareness bar-
beque the following month. 
As part of this event, the MEC 
officers decided to volunteer to sit in a dunk 
tank to raise money for AERF. 
Kampen understands that the 
program is only as successful 
as our members make it, and 
that the fund relies solely on 
donations.

Kampen alternated with 
F/O Olivier Goudreau, MEC 
vice chairman, and Capt. 
Korey Hazelwood, MEC 
secretary-treasurer, taking 
turns dangling above a tank 
while pilots and their family 
members attempted to hit a 
target with a ball to send the 
sitting officer plunging into 
icy-cold water. The MEC then 
made a much-appreciated 
contribution to AERF from 
with the immediate, extra-
odinary expenses caused by 
widespread catastrophic 
events.

I would be remiss if I didn’t 
once again acknowledge the 
sizeable donations the United 
Pilots Unity Fund and the 
Delta Pilots Charitable Fund 
made earlier this year to 
help us accommodate those 
affected by Hurricane Sandy 
and to keep the fund afloat. 
These contributions were 
extremely generous, but more 
help is needed.

My fellow AERF board 
members, F/Os Christine 
Gromek (United) and Mark 
Segaloff (Continental), and 
I want you to think of AERF 
in the same way you think 
about your ALPA worldwide 
accident/incident hotline “or-
ange card” or the Aeromedical 
Office. Always be aware that 
this resource is available, and 
don’t hesitate to use it when 
you need it.

Follow the excellent ex-
ample of the Canadian North 
pilots and consider raising 
money to support AERF. The 
fund is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit 
organization, so if you have 
questions about appropriate 
fund-raising activities, don’t 
hesitate to give us a call. As 
a matter of fact, we have some 
fund-raising plans of our own, 
but you’ll hear more about 
that later this fall.

The obvious—and 
sometimes not so obvious— 
advantages of belonging to 
ALPA come from airline pilots 
pooling their resources and 
working together to support 
each other. Only by taking 
these steps is ALPA’s existence 
possible, and only by promot-
and backing AERF will this 
resource be available to us. So 
spread the word and support 
AERF! Think of it as our collec-
tive rainy-day savings account.

To learn more about AERF 
and other emergency-related 
resources, or to watch a 
video about a member whose 
family benefited from the 
program, request a grant, or 
make a donation, go to www. 
alpa.org/relieffund. Donations 
are tax-deductible in the 
United States, but remember 
that AERF is available to all 
ALPA members—above and 
below the 49th parallel—
who qualify.