



# ALPA's Total Benefit

By Capt. Chris Beebe, ALPA Vice-President-Finance/Treasurer



The total benefit of ALPA membership is much more than the magazine that you are holding in your hands at this moment. But that truth is often hard

for members to grasp.

At every annual ALPA Leadership Conference (to help new LEC and MEC officers with the workings of ALPA) and every Secretary/Treasurer Conference, I present a brief slide show, *Your Dues Dollar*. This program is intended to acquaint your representatives with how the 1.95 percent of your paycheck is distributed, and perhaps more importantly, what services are available through ALPA.

This program shows that each and every dues dollar goes to support you as a member, either through your MEC, from the union as a whole to you through your MEC, or directly to you from the whole union. I will note that the greater the stress being placed on an MEC (whether from typical Section 6 negotiations or management requests for relief), the greater the need for these services.

A brief summary of what ALPA provides to your MEC and so, to you, includes the services of the following departments:

- The Representation Department provides support for negotiations and the enforcement of our contracts through the grievance process. It also helps your representatives in discipline and termination hearings.
- The internationally recognized Economic and Financial Analysis Department provides the analysis needed to evaluate management business plans or to determine the value of pilot or management negotiating proposals.
- The Retirement and Insurance Department provides actuaries and legal advice on pension plans and

medical benefits from our in-house R&I specialists and attorneys.

- The Government Affairs Department is ALPA's lobbying arm, working to promote legislation beneficial to, and to stop legislation detrimental to, our members. ALPA is the only union to have pension reform placed before Congress.
- The Communications Department

**So, when the conversation in your cockpit goes like this: "I pay 1.95 percent of my income to ALPA and all I get for it is this magazine," think of not just what is between these magazine covers, but of what is behind ALPA—an organization built around the needs and services specific to airline pilots.**

ment, besides producing this award-winning magazine, helps your own MEC Communications Committee get the word out to you, through news releases, your LEC and MEC newsletters, and your strategic planning committees.

- The Legal Department provides advice to your MEC and processes litigation and arbitrations.
- The Finance and Membership Departments not only process member benefit programs but also dues and any assessments your MEC passes for such projects as paying furloughed pilots' medical benefits. Our internal billing and accounting systems allow the processing of ALPA's business to be accomplished much more effectively and inexpensively than by using an outside vendor.

- Our Information Technology Department manages our computer networks and information systems, including our outstanding website.
- The Engineering and Air Safety Department supports ALPA's wide-ranging safety and security efforts at the government and airline levels.
- The Human Resources Department helps manage the benefit programs for ALPA's 400 employees.

All of these departments within ALPA include experts on pilots and are tailored to ALPA members' needs.

Now, let me get to the heart of this message. Most pilot groups have chosen ALPA as their union. As recently as 2001 and 2002, the pilots of Continental and FedEx joined our ranks after years with in-house unions. Why? They did not become ALPA members because they were financially weak—just the opposite. They returned because of ALPA's services and resources.

The last element I will mention here is the very democratic nature of our union. Our *Constitution* allows for self-determination by your pilot group. You have the ability, through either your representatives or direct vote, to control the direction that ALPA takes at your airline.

So, when the conversation in your cockpit goes like this: "I pay 1.95 percent of my income to ALPA and all I get for it is this magazine," think of not just what is between these magazine covers, but of what is behind the Air Line Pilots Association—an organization built around the needs and services specific to airline pilots. Think of the input you have in choosing the right course for your group. Reflect on how active you have been to become involved in representing your pilots or one of the various volunteer committee positions. The passive complain, but truly active members make the effort to do something about it. 🌐