

Safety Is ALPA's Bread and Butter

By Marion C. Blakey, Administrator, Federal Aviation Administration



Aviation safety is a shared responsibility. The FAA has developed many productive relationships over the years with a wide variety of groups, and one

of the most successful has been with ALPA.

Your influence can be found on nearly every major safety initiative in the last decade, from cockpit instrumentation design to ADS-B. Even more valuable is the role you play in the Commercial Aviation Safety Team's efforts to drive down the accident rate, which currently is hovering at a historic low.

These successes are a testament to the mission of ALPA—to emphasize safety at every turn. It's written right there in your Code of Ethics. And it has been in practice since ALPA first organized 75 years ago.

As airline pilots, you have every right to be proud of your work. From the FAA's perspective, you're second to none. The public agrees, and the passenger numbers prove it.

Hard as it may be to believe, we've done the easy work. What lies ahead, if we're to continue to reduce the risk of accidents, will be harder than anything else we've undertaken. We have to determine where the risks lie, and then go about eliminating, mitigating, or managing the risk before an accident happens. Information sharing is critical to this endeavor.

The Aviation Safety Action Program—ASAP—is providing an unprecedented opportunity to lift our safety efforts to higher heights. By allowing everyone involved to report problems quickly without fear of retribution, we're getting a better look at human performance errors while improving interactions between humans and machines.

Just six years after its launch, ASAP has 50 airlines and their employee groups participating. More than 100 memorandums of understanding have been established for pilots, dispatchers, mechanics, and flight attendants. This wouldn't have happened without ALPA's energetic support.

The Association is also a key driver behind the flight operations quality

won't do. We know that the current U.S. air transportation system cannot meet tomorrow's needs.

It's going to take a revolution, and that's just what we're going to get with the Next Generation Air Transportation System, one of the most important aviation programs that government and industry stakeholders have undertaken in decades. We

"Your influence can be found on nearly every major safety initiative in the last decade, from cockpit instrumentation design to ADS-B. ...Pilots truly are the sentries of the skies. And I am confident that despite the industry's challenges, the greatest days of aviation are yet to come."



assurance program (FOQA), which gives us a clear, objective pic-

ture on adverse safety trends by analyzing data from multiple flights. This information is crucial. It helps us stay one step ahead of an accident by spotting problems *before* they result in a tragedy.

Of course, no talk of aviation safety would be complete without mentioning the huge advances in technology. And under the Required Navigation Performance concept, with its greater accuracy and predictability, is where we will really begin to realize the benefits.

With RNP, we are replacing hand-flown visual procedures with precision procedures. There will be far fewer missed approaches with RNP. And that is a huge safety benefit.

Looking ahead, the changes occurring in our skies and coming down our runways are so significant and so fundamental that temporary adjustments and Band-Aid solutions just

are determined to get out in front of the enormous changes in our air transportation system. We must manage these looming demands before they manage us. With your help, we're going to get there.

In addition to the safety benefits, NextGen technologies position us to use our airspace more efficiently as we head toward more than a billion passengers per year by 2015, less than 10 years away. Clearly, this move to a modern, satellite-based aviation system is going to bring operational changes to the cockpit, to the control tower, and to every inch of airspace in between.

I look forward to rolling up my sleeves with ALPA to make sure that aviation is safer tomorrow than it is today.

Pilots truly are the sentries of the skies. And I am confident that despite the industry's challenges, the greatest days of aviation are yet to come.

On behalf of President Bush and Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta, I thank ALPA for standing shoulder to shoulder with us in the name of aviation safety. Best wishes, and happy 75th birthday! 🌟