

@ALPA WORK

Advancing the Profession...Pilots & Staff

Working in Harmony

In March, ALPA leaders from “mainline affiliated” airline pilot groups convened a Fee for Departure Summit in St. Louis, Mo., to discuss collaboration across pilot group lines to meet their common goals. The goals of these pilots are the goals of all pilots—reasonable pay, benefits, work rules, and job security that together recognize a pilot’s contribution to his or her airline and provide quality of life for pilots and their families.

Leaders (including MEC reps and members of various committees) from 12 ALPA express pilot groups devoted 2 days to

sharing information and formulating strategies for protecting jobs and building careers at fee-for-departure airlines. Among those attending were pilots from Air Canada Jazz, American Eagle, Atlantic Southeast, Champion, Comair, ExpressJet, Mesa Air Group, Mesaba, Piedmont, Pinnacle, PSA, and Trans States. These fee-for-departure operators provide most of the passenger feed for North America’s major network airlines (Continental, Delta, Northwest, United, US Airways, Air Canada, and American). Several ALPA national officers, executive vice-presidents, committee members, pilots from mainline airlines, and key staff members were on hand as well.

“As a segment of the industry, we are working toward a long-term goal,” said Capt. Tom Wychor, an organizer of the Summit, a member of ALPA’s Strategic Planning Committee, and former Mesaba MEC chairman. “And that goal is to work within airline brands and across corporate lines to create harmonized contract standards and pilot migration mechanisms that would allow pilots’ longevity and seniority to follow their flying.”

The program covered a wide variety of issues, including the following:

- Pilots’ goals, job stability, pilot migration, and contract harmonization;
- Mutual assistance in a consolidating environment; and
- Joint standing committees to advance pilot groups’ goals and objectives.

“Airline pilots are thinking in new and creative ways,” said ALPA’s president, Capt. John Prater. “This Summit brought together a generation of pilot leaders who are planning to raise the bar for pilots across all segments of our industry.”

Pilot leaders from express airlines plan to meet before the May Executive Board and and again before the October



Organizers of the highly successful Fee For Departure Summit were (standing, from left) Capt. Bill Dressler (ExpressJet), Capt. Tom Wychor (Mesaba), and Capt. Dave Nieuwenhuis (Atlantic Southeast), plus Capt. J.C. Lawson (Comair), not shown.



ABOVE: For an informal demonstration of support for Trans States pilots and at the invitation of the Trans States MEC, Summit attendees grab signs for the camera.

RIGHT: The Fee For Departure Summit gathers leaders of 12 ALPA pilot groups, which provide most of the domestic passenger feed for North America's major network airlines.



Board of Directors meeting to continue coordinating their negotiation and support activities. Representatives from each pilot group also will work with staff and organizers to develop a strategic plan for collaboration among fee-for-departure pilot groups to present at the BOD meeting.

For more on the Summit, please contact Wychor at tom.wychor@alpa.org.

Defending the Flight Deck: A Five-Year Perspective

By Capt. Bob Hesselbein (Northwest)
ALPA National Security Committee Chairman

The Federal Flight Deck Officer (FFDO) program became a reality on April 19, 2003, when 44 airline pilots graduated from federal law enforcement training. On that day, armed pilots began to provide an incomparable level of aircraft security and the ultimate defense against those who would violently seize an airliner.

The FFDO program did not evolve easily. Cultural and political resistance to arming pilots required ALPA advocacy, negotiation, and compromise. The legislation in 2002 excluded pilots who fly for all-cargo airlines, limited federal responsibility to training and weapon issuance, and failed to carefully define many of the details needed to create a comprehensive law

enforcement organization. Additional legislation was passed in 2003 to authorize cargo pilot participation.

The Transportation Security Administration rightfully touts the Federal Flight Deck Officer program as one of its top 20 successful security programs with good reason. The airline pilots who voluntarily protect their cockpits constitute a serious deterrent to terrorist hijackers and maintain an exceptional weapons-safety record while quietly executing their duties. But many aspects of the FFDO program need to be improved, and soon.

In the 5 years since the first FFDO graduation ceremony, the force has grown to number more than 10,000 active participants who routinely protect more than 130,000 flights each month. Although the ranks of the program have grown significantly, the supporting infrastructure has not.

At the present time, the FFDO program is neither operated nor structured like a traditional federal law enforcement organization. Under the umbrella of the Department of Homeland Security and the TSA, the Federal Air Marshal Service (FAMS) manages and administers the FFDO program. Although managed by FAMS, the FFDO program has

@ALPA WORK

Advancing the Profession...Pilots & Staff

not been integrated into the FAMS mainstream effort, but is instead situated within the resource-thin FAMS Office of Flight Operations.

FFDO pilots are provided with neither the funding nor the

resources enjoyed by air marshals. Assigned to the FAMS Office of Field Operations, operational air marshals enjoy the support of 21 field offices, 20-to-1 supervision, mentoring, and extensive training resources. FFDOs, on the other hand, are provided with only a website, a telephone number, and a supervisor—one supervisor to deal with more than 10,000 armed pilots. The clear lack of supporting staff personnel and structure, in the face of the significant FFDO population, is unacceptable and must be addressed by Congress and the DHS.

The TSA's procedures for FFDO weapons handling and storage must be revised to enhance safety. Before the March 22 weapons incident aboard a US Airways airplane, ALPA had repeatedly warned the TSA that the current non-standard, law-enforcement weapons-handling procedures used by FFDOs could result in an accidental discharge. To

FFDOs, CrewPASS Drive NSC Work

MEC Security Committee chairmen and coordinators gathered at ALPA's Herndon Conference Center to participate in the Association's National Security Committee (NSC) meeting, March 25–27. The ALPA pilots, who were seeking updates on important ALPA-driven security initiatives and activities, provided their knowledge and expertise to focus NSC efforts.

Recent news media attention to Federal Flight Deck Officer (FFDO) program weapons safety issues is providing an opportunity to highlight ALPA's concern about the program's weapons-carriage procedure problems and the TSA's underfunding and program understaffing. Speaking of the NSC's critical role in promoting the Association's FFDO initiatives, ALPA NSC chairman, Capt. Bob Hesselbein (Northwest), commented, "We must articulate and create a message that communicates not only what this program does, but also what it needs. The program must be restructured and properly funded."

NSC discussions centered on the status of its many pressing projects, reexamining the rapid growth in the Committee's scope of work and interests as it focuses to meet the needs of a changing air transportation system.

Hesselbein attributes his Committee's expanded role to

a "very dynamic security world." Ongoing NSC concerns have received national news media attention, further highlighting the Committee's relevance for ALPA's members. The Association, in an effort to convince the TSA to adopt CrewPASS, recently launched a full-court-press campaign with newspaper ads, informational picketing in Washington, D.C., press releases, and other related items.

ALPA's president, Capt. John Prater, updated the NSC on his meetings on CrewPASS and FFDO issues with TSA Administrator Kip Hawley and TSA program managers and the continued efforts to have the TSA implement solutions to ALPA's concerns.

Other NSC meeting hot topics included the ongoing campaign to mandate secondary barriers as a deterrent to hostile cockpit takeovers, the need for improved cargo security standards, new challenges associated with changes in international operations, Canada's unique security issues, crewmember self-defense training, TSA and Federal Air Marshal Services concerns, and the importance of industry information-sharing. The group also discussed plans for AvSec 2008, the upcoming Aviation Security Forum, as part of ALPA's Air Safety and Security Week in mid-August.

ALPA's vice-president-finance/treasurer, Capt. Chris Beebe, recalled the NSC's reorganization in May 2005 and the Association's improved understanding, recognition, and support for air transportation security engagement. He highlighted NSC accomplishments, describing them as the result of "the ability of a national union to do things for the betterment of its profession."

For the first time at an NSC meeting, representatives from the Canadian Royal Mounted Police Air Carrier Protective Officer Program joined with members of the U.S. Federal Air Marshal Service to discuss security procedures and field questions from meeting attendees.

In addition, the election of Capt. Barry Kendrick (America West) as the new chairman of the ALPA Security Council was announced. The Security Council serves as a communications link between the NSC and MEC Security Committees.



JOHN PERKINSON

Capt. Maury Gottlieb (Atlantic Southeast), left, and F/O Paul Chesek (Delta), MEC security chairmen, hear a FAMS briefing.

date, only the professionalism of FFDO pilots has sustained the outstanding safety enjoyed by this program. But professionalism cannot replace sound procedures. ALPA strongly urges the TSA to establish traditional law-enforcement weapons-handling procedures for the FFDO program.

Clearly, no alternative can replace the deterrent value established by a well-trained, well-armed airline pilot protecting a flight deck against a terrorist attack. In the 5 years since the first class graduated from FFDO training, the volunteer pilots who serve and protect their passengers have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to the program by their personal sacrifice of time and expense.

It is now time for the federal government to demonstrate its commitment to the FFDO program. It is time for Congress to recognize the value of the program and address the grievous shortcomings by establishing a robust law enforcement support structure and providing proper funding. It is time for the TSA to establish proper weapons-handling procedures to ensure safety on the flight deck. And it is time to institutionally integrate the FFDO program into the mainstream of the Federal Air Marshal Service.

Federal flight deck officers serve anonymously and proudly, remembering the reasons for their voluntary duty.



JOHN PERKINSON

NSC chairman, Capt. Bob Hesselbein (Northwest), seated right, comments during a briefing from NSC director of operations and training, Capt. Todd O'Brien (Piedmont), center.

They are committed to the words, "Never Again," and demonstrate that commitment in the execution of their mission. ALPA stands firmly behind the purpose and the pilots who defend our flight decks.

MEC Secretary/Treasurer Conference Underscores Importance of Accountability

Capt. Scott Johnson (Atlantic Southeast) realizes he faces a steep learning curve as his MEC's new secretary/treasurer. That's why he attended ALPA's annual MEC Secretary/Treasurer Conference. He says, "The meeting gave me individuals to contact for help and the foundation I need to take on this new role for my pilot group."

Johnson and other secretary/treasurers from ALPA's 43 pilot groups convened at the Association's Herndon, Va., Conference Center, March 11-13, to discuss their many duties and the wide range of resources available to help them.

"The pilots' money keeps this Association in operation and you are charged with making this organization run," said ALPA's vice-president-finance/treasurer, Capt. Chris Beebe, during his opening remarks to the Conference. "You can be credible with your pilots only if you are transparent with finances and they trust you."

Transparency was a recurring theme. ALPA's president, Capt. John Prater, thanked the attendees for their spirit of volunteerism and stressed the importance

of running "a clean union." He compared the secretary/treasurer's job to that of the chief financial officer of a corporation. Prater during the early 1980s served as secretary/treasurer of the Continental MEC and of the Houston and Guam Local Councils, so he is intimately familiar with the position's numerous demands.

Money matters

During the 2½-day event, the Association's MEC secretary/treasurers learned how the organization allocates its resources. They talked about dues structures, examined online tools for preparing operating budgets, and discussed the use of the Association's special MEC reserve accounts. The officers were briefed about the current shortfall in ALPA's operating contingency fund, but also learned about the Association's \$82 million major contingency fund (MCF)—sometimes referred to as ALPA's war chest—and how it can be accessed for strike-related activities and other campaigns.

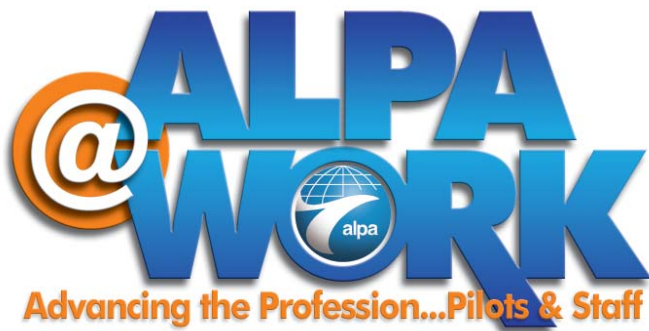
"ALPA's financial condition is solid," affirmed the Association's general manager, Jalmer Johnson. However, he talked about the increased demand for resources in recent years with the onslaught of bankruptcies and other post-9/11 problems. A decline in dues income from 2003 through 2006 led the union to undertake a broad-based reengineering of the Association, including reducing the number of staff positions by nearly 70, many by attrition, to help the Association manage costs. However, Johnson cited the strength of the MCF and talked about the need to be efficient, to be focused on ALPA priorities, and to be guided by balanced decision-making.

Capt. Blane Dye (Alaska) and Professional Flight Engineer



JOHN PERKINSON

Capt. Beebe listens while Capt. Kevin Friel (ATA), an ALPA executive vice-president speaks.



Tim Griesa (ATA) shared their experiences as strike oversight board representatives, assigned to oversee MCF allocations to other pilot groups. They explained how these additional funds can be used and the process required to account for these allotments. Dye noted, "A pilot group's request for an MCF grant begins with an MEC resolution."

Finances are but half of a secretary/treasurer's responsibility and ALPA's vice-president—administration/secretary, Capt. Bill Couette, reviewed the Association's Constitution and By Laws, *Administrative Manual*, and Robert's Rules of Order,

which all serve as ALPA's administrative foundation. Conference attendees also learned that 24 MECs each have a policy manual that outlines how that MEC conducts its business.

Couette discussed proxy usage, quorums for making group decisions, and recording and posting meeting minutes. He explained terms of office, filling office vacancies, and the unique role of the executive administrator—topics that secretary/treasurers will need to be well-versed in to execute their responsibilities. "With all that you are tasked with, you really are the backbone of this Association," he told the attending secretary/treasurers.

ALPA managing attorney Clay Warner and Margarita Lorenzetti, a manager in ALPA's Finance Department, covered accounting for financial transactions and their fiduciary responsibilities, what constitutes adequate documentation, and annual government reporting requirements. Conference participants learned about accounting for MEC expenses and the Association's available IT support for retaining documents.

ALPA secretary/treasurers networked with one another and made valuable staff contacts to supplement all that they covered during this information-packed Conference.

Not Your Grandfather's Retirement

R&I Committee Confronts New Challenges with a New Mission

As U.S. workers pay for a greater portion of their health care, and pensions are replaced by 401(k) programs (of ALPA's 43 pilot groups, only 7 still have defined-benefit plans), ALPA's approach to retirement and insurance issues has changed. ALPA's Retirement and Insurance (R&I) Committee, working with the Association's R&I Department, has revamped member programs and services to better align with the evolving R&I reality.

"Rather than focus the majority of our time on membership plans, we will become increasingly involved in the collective bargaining process," said ALPA's recently appointed R&I Committee chairman, Capt. Scott Stratton (FedEx), addressing attendees of a recent meeting of the Committee. "We will research macro issues that affect our committees and members, and develop a clear communications plan. We will become R&I problem solvers."

The national Committee is planning to routinely interact with pilot MECs and other ALPA entities to share information and solutions. Stratton plans to individually visit MEC R&I chairmen representing the 10 largest ALPA pilot groups, and is scheduling quarterly conference calls with all R&I chairs. The Committee is working closely with other ALPA national committees, like the national Collective Bargaining Committee (CBC), to compare notes and coordinate strategies. R&I also plans to coordinate more closely with ALPA's Government Affairs Department to press for legislative assistance. The R&I Committee has divided its workload among five new subcommittees: Collective Bargaining and Strategy, VEBA (Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association) and Membership Benefits, Education and Legislative Activities, Investment-Related Oversight and Financial Planning, and Communications.

The R&I Committee met March 17–18 to discuss current plans, benefits, and services offered to ALPA members, including the Association's wide array of insurance plans (go to www.alpa.org/mbin for details). Meeting attendees heard actuarial reviews as well as presentations from Fidelity and New York Life. They discussed investment management, but much of the group's conversation concentrated on adjusting to the Committee's change in focus and its efforts to be more "relevant" to member needs.

Stratton, who also serves as the FedEx MEC's R&I chairman, related his pilot group's experience in developing a VEBA plan to address pilot healthcare needs. A VEBA is a tax-exempt trust authorized by Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(9), which enables the employer to make tax-free deposits to the plan on the pilots' behalf. These deposits, together with tax-free investment earnings, allow pilots to obtain tax-free reimbursements for their qualified medical expenses and insurance premium payments.

The FedEx VEBA has been so successful that the national R&I Committee is sharing the details with the CBC to help formulate future negotiating strategies to better address member needs.

"The national R&I Committee has a new path with a simple goal—to help our valued members meet today's challenges while preparing for a financially secure future," said Stratton.

Stratton succeeds First Officer Ken Rogers (Delta) who has served for many years as the national R&I chairman, and who is also the pilot representative to the Delta Air Lines Board of Directors. ALPA's president, Capt. John Prater, in a recent letter to Rogers, praised his many years of leadership and service. Prater noted, "Your oversight has allowed (ALPA's) trust funds to stabilize and strengthen through your wise selection of qualified investment professionals."

National Committee Chairs Map Out the Future

Don Skiados, longtime director of ALPA's Communications Department, looked ALPA National Committee chairmen in the eye at their March conference, and said, "This meeting is a major attempt to change the way your union works. ALPA's President is asking you to be in an upfront position in creating the strategy for 2009." The conference was held March 10-11 at the Association's offices in Herndon, Va.

The meeting's purpose was to lay out ALPA's action priorities for the next 18 months and to brainstorm ways to convey the national Association's value to all its members.

The ALPA Committees—chaired by and made up of pilots, advised by staff, and coordinated by National Officers—fuel ALPA's vision and support the pilot groups' local committees.

"The main purpose in our being together today is not to tell each other what we've been doing for the union, but how to make this union better, stronger," Capt. John Prater said in his opening remarks. "What is the relevance of ALPA's National Committees to our members today? We need to keep our focus on what they want from their international union.

"The National Committees need to be more visible. Make sure your counterparts at each airline know what resources are available. We have to remind our members that they are better off with ALPA than with no union or an independent one."

Capt. Chris Beebe, ALPA vice-president—finance/treasurer, added, "This union's rebuilding has to start at the local level. We need to help instill a sense of commitment and conviction in local leaders, to begin with."

Skiados asked the chairmen to "tell one thing you're going to build from your Committees in the coming year."

Among the Committees' goals for 2008-09 are

Security—Through CrewPASS, make airport screening easier for pilots, who are already vetted and approved to enter the flight deck.

Membership—Educate pilots on ALPA structure and services when they're hired, and ensure that Membership Committees are established at each ALPA pilot group.

Leadership—Bring new officers up to speed at the annual Leadership Conference on what ALPA returns for their dues; that way, each year one-third of the BOD can tell their pilots what ALPA provides; have video clips on each Committee's work at the next conference.

Strategic Preparation and Strike—Provide support to ALPA's SPCs and continue to organize ALPA-wide events to build unity among all Association members.

Retirement and Insurance—Become more involved with collective bargaining; coordinate wins at airlines and share them with other pilot groups. Consider whether ALPA could sponsor a defined-contribution plan to relieve some airlines of the administrative burden, generating a larger contribution for pilots.

Collective Bargaining—Establish positive bargaining patterns; provide assistance to Negotiating Committees with-

out longevity or experience in certain areas; coordinate more closely in R&I and flight-time/duty-time areas; influence the direction of the National Mediation Board; influence the course of labor legislation.

Cargo—Elevate all-cargo airlines to One Level of Safety, working with Safety and Security Committees to educate and train firefighters on what they might face with a cargo accident, particularly at the Wilmington, Ohio, Airpark, an all-cargo destination; help new pilot group members Evergreen and Capital Air Cargo address their issues.

Merger Policy—Review merger policy and make recommendations for change, if needed.

Education—Enhance public relations and speaker avail-



The ALPA National Committees—chaired by and made up of pilots, advised by staff, and coordinated by National Officers—fuel the Association's vision and support the pilot groups' local committees.

ability for students and others interested in the airline piloting profession.

International Affairs—Monitor changes in airline organization and regulatory structures; develop strategies for a globalized airline industry.

Flight-Time/Duty-Time—Improve conditions to reduce pilot fatigue, working with Collective Bargaining and Aeromedical Committees.

Safety—Continue the work of the Aviation Safety Information Analysis and Sharing Program, developed with the FAA to promote open exchange of safety information among various stakeholders so that accidents can be prevented.

National Airspace Modernization—Lead the charge to certify the surface moving map with traffic and runway status indications on Class 2 electronic flight bags toward Automatic Dependent Surveillance—Broadcast applications.

Pilot Assistance—Put together MEC road shows for the smaller pilot groups to recruit, train, and retain volunteers; develop a website that encourages volunteering according to skills, interest, and schedule.

Capt. John Sluys (Alaska), Membership Committee chairman, said after the meeting, "ALPA National Committee chairmen can play an important role in the strategic plan of this organization. It's a credit to our national officers that they opened their arms to developing an all-encompassing strategy to address our ever-evolving profession and industry." 🌐