


**A**LPA's ability to speak with one voice is nothing short of remarkable. Representing 37 diverse pilot groups that cope on a daily basis with differing circumstances is indeed no easy task. Yet when the Association has the support of pilot leaders who see the positive, long-lasting effects of solidarity and the unquestionable benefits this brings for collective bargaining, much can be accomplished for the good of every ALPA pilot and the entire profession.

ALPA is fortunate to have among its leaders strategic thinkers and planners who see beyond tomorrow. And those leaders are fortunate to represent pilots who would have it no other way.

Whether they're confronting winter operations in the Northwest Territories, working in congested air-space near major hubs, or transporting all types of cargo, airline pilots share key concerns: working in a safe and secure environment, flying schedules that provide for adequate rest, and being fairly compensated with wages and benefits that reflect their productivity and contributions to their companies.

During the Association's recent 42nd Board of Directors meeting, 217 of the union's pilot representatives established a single strategic plan for the Association. That plan outlines new programs that will reconnect ALPA with its 37 pilot groups and 53,000-plus members and make the union more effective in its collective bargaining endeavors and regulatory and legislative efforts.

Because ALPA is a member-driven organization, the combination of similar and divergent pilot experiences creates a dynamic atmosphere in which best practices rise to the surface to be discussed and shared. These practices are passed along to other pilot groups through national committee structures, such as the Collective Bargaining Committee and the Strategic Preparedness and Strike Committee, as adjustable templates to use for meeting similar challenges.

ALPA's structure encourages individual master executive councils to develop their own strategic plans that set member goals and objectives to better position ALPA pilots for success. Let's take a closer look at the pilot groups that make up ALPA, *The Pilots' Union*. 

# THE SUM OF ITS PARTS



## Air Canada Jazz

### Air Canada Jazz Pilots Prepare for Next Negotiations

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**Jazz is the second largest airline in Canada, with 800-plus daily flights and 85 scheduled destinations in Canada and the United States. The company also has an operation dedicated to charters using both the Dash 8s and CRJs.**

The Air Canada Jazz pilots have come a long way from the initial merger of the four original airlines and their emergence from Companies' Creditor Arrangement Act (the Canadian equivalent to Chapter 11 reorganization under the Bankruptcy Code) at the end of 2004.

"Our pilot group has an enormous depth of experience, not just in operations but in pilot labour relations as well," says Capt. Brian Shury, the Air Canada Jazz pilots' Master Executive Council chairman. Jazz was created by the successful merger of four smaller carriers that were affiliated with Air Canada and Canadian Airlines.

"The transition challenges shaped the pilot group, and the experience has made us stronger and wiser," says Shury. "The merger occurred in the aftermath of September 11 and is considered to be one of the most successful not just in ALPA's history but in the airline industry's history," he adds.

As the pilot group gears up for negotiations, the MEC has been polling the members to help determine their concerns, and the MEC Negotiating Committee has been conducting a series of meet-and-greet sessions across the country to complement this. Issues that will clearly have to be addressed include wages, profit-sharing, reassignment rules, and overtime. The current ACJ collective bargaining agreement expires June 30, 2009.

"This is the first opportunity for the real Jazz to bargain as a group," Shury points out. "We embrace the strategic goals adopted at the October ALPA Board

of Directors meeting, and we look forward to making full use of the Association's many resources. As an example, for the first time the MEC has formed a Strategic Planning and Strike Committee using the ALPA model."

Recently, as economic conditions threatened to adversely affect Jazz operations, ALPA has negotiated options for the pilots, including reduced time blocks and voluntary leaves of absence.

"Jazz pilots have a very experienced negotiating team," says Shury. "We believe that with the support of the pilots, their families, and the resources from ALPA, we will reach our goal of a re-

newed collective agreement balancing compensation and lifestyle in such a way that Jazz remains a career choice for our pilots."

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Jazz operates through a capacity purchase agreement (CPA) with Air Canada, the result of restructuring the entire Air Canada Corporation, which was completed in September 2004. The CPA provides the majority of the company's revenue; in the third quarter of 2008, Jazz reported record earnings of C\$42.3 million.

### ACJ at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** Approximately 1,550

**Operations:** Air Canada Jazz carries approximately 27 million passengers per year on 800+ flights daily to 85 destinations across Canada and the United States

**Pilot Bases:** Halifax, N.S.; Vancouver, B.C.; Calgary, Alta.; Toronto, Ont.; Montreal, P.Q.

**Headquarters:** Halifax, N.S.

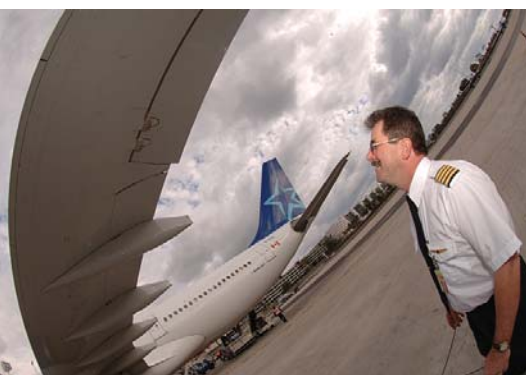
**Fleet:** 137 airplanes, including Dash 8-100/300s and Bombardier CRJ-100/-200/705s



## Air Transat

### Air Transat Pilots Benefit by Working Together

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**Capt. Marcel Beauchemin preflights his A330 at Fort Lauderdale–Hollywood International Airport.**

### TSC at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 312

**Headquarters:** Pierre E. Trudeau International Airport, Montreal, P.Q.

**Fleet:** 14 A310s and 4 A330s

**Crew Bases:** Montreal, P.Q.; Toronto, Ont.; and Vancouver, B.C.

The economic crisis has forced many airlines to take extreme measures—including furloughs and voluntary leaves of absence—to stay in business. However, Air Transat pilots are well positioned as their company is hiring more pilots to support their expanding services.

Capitalizing on their good fortune, the pilots have a goal for 2009: Maintain the high sense of belonging and pride they've developed through years of flying together. "We want to continue the current, great inter-relationships we have within our pilot group," says Capt. Sylvain Aubin, Air Transat's Master Executive Council chairman. The camaraderie is the byproduct of a successful collective bargaining agreement negotiated with management and ratified in February 2006 that set the foundation for improvements in working conditions. "Recognition from management is essential and valuable for an effective and productive partnership," says Aubin.

The current contract is the third they have negotiated since 1999 as ALPA members. The success of the collective bargaining process between the pilots and management has inspired Air Transat pilots to continue shaping and influencing the growth of their airline, Aubin says.

Though pilot contract negotiations do not resume until 2010, Aubin hopes to see the pilots continue as a unified group and remain in a good position to execute a respectful and productive negotiations process. The collective bargaining agreement Air Transat's pilots ratified in February 2006 continues to provide an effective framework for planned improvements in areas the pilots consider to be top priorities, especially the issue of flight crew fatigue. The 2006 agreement reduced pairing lengths from 8 days to 6 and reduced the maximum number of consecutive days that a pilot can work to 7 days. "Looking ahead five years, our pilots would like to be in a position to effectively partner with management to collaborate on a Fatigue Risk Management System that mitigates pilot fatigue," says Aubin.

Furthering their commitment to combat fatigue, Air Transat pilots achieved a noteworthy milestone in 2008: The airline was confirmed by the International Air Transport Association (IATA) as an IOSA-registered operator, capping 18 months of intense preparation and process enhancements. The IOSA registration provides a standardized audit program for airlines' operational management and control systems based on internationally recognized standards and supported by a rigorous quality assurance process aimed at improving operations and safety. Air Transat pilots remain steadfastly committed to achieving better scheduling practices for their pilots and other Canadian pilot groups in order to decrease pilot fatigue.

Air Transat pilots do not take their success lightly. Recent challenges brought on by the economic forces reshaping the airline industry cannot be ignored. Aubin acknowledges that Air Transat pilots will have to deal with operational pressures and make adjustments to keep operational costs as low as possible. Lower fuel prices have been undermined by devaluation of the Canadian dollar. "Since we are a vacation airline, the challenge will be significant with this global economic crisis," says Aubin.

Air Transat specializes in both scheduled and chartered flights from several Canadian cities to global vacation destinations. The carrier has 60 direct city-pair routes with 30 southerly destinations and 32 cities in 11 European countries, including Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and the UK. Several new routes have also been added, including a flight to Bale-Mulhouse on the French-Swiss border and new connections between Montreal and Dublin, Toronto and Nice, Vancouver and Paris, and Calgary and Paris.

In the span of just 2 years, the company has added two additional Airbus A310-300s, bringing the number of widebody jets in its fleet to 18. Air Transat operates approximately 13,000 flights per year from gateways across Canada. 🌐

**A**ir Wisconsin's pilot group, following major corporate changes to provide lift to US Airways rather than United and the wholesale move of bases and flying to the East Coast, is undergoing change itself. Guiding the pilot group are new pilot leaders elected in August 2008 and a new Communications Committee chairman eager to reinvigorate communications and emphasize the new Master Executive Council's desire for more information and two-way communication with the pilots.

## Air Wisconsin

### Air Wisconsin Pilots Enter New Era

**By Kimberly Seitz**  
ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**F/O Christopher Dyrstad preflights his aircraft before a flight.**

This desire for more information and openness grew out of recent concerns that Air Wisconsin pilot leaders would benefit from connecting more closely with a pilot group whose demographics and workplace had changed dramatically over the past few years.

In 2001, Air Wisconsin pilots approved an industry-leading contract that would have become amendable in 2005. When United Airlines filed for bankruptcy, it served notice on its feeder carriers that all of their flying would be put up for bid and be awarded to the lowest bidders. The Air Wisconsin pilots ratified a restructuring letter of agreement to try to retain the United codeshare in the spring of 2003, which extended the contract duration until 2011. Despite the concessions, United later rejected the feeder contract with Air Wisconsin.

Air Wisconsin invested in US Airways, also in bankruptcy, and began operating as Airways Express in 2005. Despite the restructuring letter, Air Wisconsin pilots still have, in many ways, an industry-leading contract.

Management's attempts to make unilateral changes to the collective bargaining agreement and unprecedented levels of discipline and contract grievances in 2007 spurred the MEC to work with ALPA staff to create a comprehensive, strategic communications initiative designed to address the unique needs of this evolving pilot group. The launch of the "Do I Have a Future Here?" campaign, which ultimately produced more meaningful dialogue between the pilot group and Air Wisconsin management, prompted the new MEC to recognize the need for more effective and timely communications between the union leaders and the pilots.

Capt. Richard Swindell, the newly elected Communications Committee chairman, along with the MEC and ALPA staff, set out to evaluate what the Air Wisconsin MEC was doing well and what it could improve on and designed a reasonable and manageable communications plan to disseminate quality information. The new communications network generates meaningful dialogue while simultaneously delivering committee and officer updates, not only to increase the orderly flow of information, but also to include the whole pilot group in the union process. Having this foundation in place will be

important as Air Wisconsin pilots approach 2010 contract negotiations.

As the largest privately held regional airline in the United States, Air Wisconsin Airlines Corporation, based in Appleton, Wisc., works in partnership with and provides feeder service for US Airways. Due to cutbacks in US Airways flying, 64 pilots are currently furloughed. 

## ARW at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** Nearly 850

**Fleet:** 70 Canadair 50-seat regional jets

**Operations:** Nearly 500 departures per day to 31 states and two Canadian provinces; with service to 70 cities throughout North America, the airline carries nearly 6 million passengers per year

**Headquarters:** Appleton, Wisc.

**Domiciles:** New York (JFK); Norfolk, Va.; Philadelphia, Pa.; Raleigh-Durham, N.C.; and Washington, D.C.

## Alaska

### Alaska Pilots Set Sights On Contract Gains

**By Jenn Farrell**  
ALPA Communications Specialist



**F/O Matthew Sears (left) and F/O Ben Corner (right) informational picket in front of the Boeing Museum of Flight in Seattle, Wash., on May 20, 2008.**

**A**laska Airlines' pilots are hopeful that, after more than 2 years of direct negotiations, 2009 will be the year they reach a new contract—and that Alaska's management won't force them to strike to obtain it. But they are preparing themselves, and their families, for the possibility that self-help may be in their future.

On May 1, 2005, Alaska pilots received an arbitrated contract that cut pilot pay by as much as 35 percent—pay cuts that Alaska's management requested from the arbitrator. The most junior first officers, who already earned the lowest pay, took the biggest cuts. The 2005 arbitrated contract marked the end of a decades-old letter of agreement that sent unresolved contract issues to binding arbitration. The pilots' next contract would be negotiated under the rules of Section 6 of the Railway Labor Act, including the possibility of a strike or a lockout.

Direct negotiations for a new contract began in January 2007, 5 months before the pilots' contract amendable date. In July 2008, after a year-and-a-half of direct negotiations, ALPA's president, Capt. John Prater, filed for mediation with the National Mediation Board at the Alaska pilots' request.

In late November 2008, after it became apparent that the issues still open could not be negotiated individually, the parties determined that exchanging comprehensive proposals was the next logical step. The pilots' Negotiating Committee and Master Executive Council chairman, Capt. Bill Shivers, traveled to Washington, D.C., the first week of December to meet with management for mediation and to exchange comprehensive proposals. But as of press time, the large economic issues remain unresolved.

"It seems that every time we feel we may be close to an agreement on a given topic, management moves the target," says Shivers. "We're hopeful that with the help of the mediator we will be able to reach an agreement—sooner rather than later—that both reflects what our pilots have earned and allows our company to continue to succeed."

While Alaska's pilot Negotiating Committee is working to negotiate a new contract that meets their goals, the pilots and their families also are readying for the possibility that management will force a strike. In the coming months, the MEC plans to

ramp up Family Awareness and grow its already active Pilot-to-Pilot® Committee to ensure that both pilots and their families are informed and ready for a potential end game in negotiations.

"Our pilots tell us that they are preparing themselves for the possibility that management will force us to strike to obtain the contract we have earned," Shivers says. "We want a contract, not a strike, but this pilot group simply is not going to give up anything more. Our management must demonstrate that it values the contributions we make to the success of our company, and it has to do it in tangible ways in the form of a new contract because anything less is unacceptable."

Alaska Airlines, like the rest of the industry, has struggled to make a profit in recent quarters. But the airline has a strong balance sheet with more than \$1 billion in cash and cash equivalents. Last summer, the airline retired its last MD-80, finishing its transition to a younger, more fuel-efficient all-Boeing 737 fleet. Additionally, Alaska's expanded its marketing alliance with Delta Air Lines, further positioning Alaska for growth and continued success.

In the 2 years between 2005 and 2007, the company enjoyed record success while the pilots worked for 21 to 35 percent less pay. "We work for a financially strong, viable airline with great potential for future success. Our management has said so, and industry analysts say so," Shivers says. 🌐

### ALA at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 1,505  
**Pilot Domiciles:** Anchorage, Los Angeles, and Seattle  
**Headquarters:** Seattle, Wash.  
**Fleet:** 111 Boeing 737-400/-400 Combi/-700/-800/-900s



## American Eagle

### American Eagle Pilots Negotiate Gains In Final Interim Amendment Round

By Lynn Konwin

ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



The newly ratified American Eagle agreement contains improvements to work rules and quality-of-life provisions for the 2,800-plus Eagle pilots while avoiding contractual concessions—goals that were attained with minimal increase in operating costs.

For the American Eagle pilots, the last of three interim contract amendment rounds that were specified in an unusual 16-year agreement has come to a close. The newly ratified agreement contains improvements to work rules and quality-of-life provisions for the 2,800-plus Eagle pilots while avoiding contractual concessions—goals that were attained with minimal increase in American Eagle’s operating costs.

In the midst of difficult economic conditions exacerbated by then skyrocketing fuel prices, the Eagle pilots’ Master Executive Council worked with management to craft an agreement that mitigated the effects on the Eagle pilot workforce of a systemwide capacity reduction announced by AMR Corporation, the holding company that owns American Airlines and American Eagle.

“With the rest of our industry confronting pilot furloughs, capacity reductions, consolidation and liquidations, our negotiators did a remarkable job in achieving the best possible solution for the Eagle pilot group,” says Capt. Herb Mark, the Eagle pilots’ MEC chairman. “Our negotiators were asked to bring us an agreement that improves our quality of life wherever possible but includes no concessions. The ratified agreement accomplishes our mission, while providing many improvements in ways that add real dollars to pilots’ pockets.”

A number of collaborative initiatives, including long-term leaves of absence and voluntary severance payments, have resulted in no Eagle pilots being involuntarily furloughed from the company as a result of capacity reduction. “American Eagle pilots have seen their share of ups and downs,” says Mark. “Yet through it all, they have remained steadfast in their commitment to providing top-notch service and maintaining a safe, secure flying environment for their passengers.”

Tackling and overcoming obstacles have strengthened the Eagle pilots and prepared them for future negotiations. In early 2009, the Eagle MEC will begin a significant education and training campaign that will help Eagle pilots understand Section 6 negotiations and how they will need to prepare for possible mergers, a divestiture, or even a strike.

When the contract becomes amendable at the end of 2012, the pilots will return to the traditional method of contract negotiations governed by Section 6 of the Railway Labor Act. The strategy of the Eagle MEC remains the same as always—to represent and defend the interests of American Eagle pilots.

“We have often been asked to serve in the middle of conflicting interests between those of American Eagle management, American Airlines management and the Allied Pilots Association, representing American Airlines’ mainline pilots,” says Capt. Rich Krutenat, Eagle MEC Communications chairman. “While the Eagle pilots have sometimes felt burned by the events surrounding these conflicting interests, the Eagle MEC has grown stronger, tougher, and smarter as a result.”

The next big event for the pilots will largely be determined by how AMR Corporation handles its feed operation. For almost a quarter century, AMR has chosen to maintain American Eagle as a wholly owned operation, with the obvious benefits of standardization, operational flexibility, brand control, and accounting practices.

If AMR opts to divest Eagle with an eye toward whip-sawing other airline labor groups against the pilots, it will find the MEC an experienced and tough opponent. 🌐

### EGL at a Glance

**Pilots:** 2,800+

**Pilot Domiciles:** Boston, Chicago, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Los Angeles, Miami, New York, and San Juan

**Operations:** 1,700+ daily flights to 150+ destinations in the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and the Bahamas; point-to-point service; feeder service for American Airlines

**Headquarters:** Ft. Worth, Tex.

**Fleet:** 253 airplanes, including Super ATRs, EMB-135/140/145s, and CRJ700s

## Atlantic Southeast

### Clearing the Contract Hurdle, Atlantic Southeast Pilots Prepare For their Next Challenge

**By David Fisher**  
ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**After more than 5 years of contentious negotiations, Atlantic Southeast Airlines pilots signed a 3-year agreement in late September 2007 that set the stage for a welcomed return to pattern bargaining.**

After more than 5 years of contentious negotiations, Atlantic Southeast Airlines pilots signed a 3-year agreement in late September 2007 that set the stage for a welcomed return to pattern bargaining. The unity and solidarity that the pilots demonstrated over this long fight led to meetings with the full National Mediation Board and ALPA's request that the NMB release the parties from mediation to a "cooling off" period and the right to strike. NMB Chairwoman Elizabeth Dougherty joined the negotiations and kept the parties in Atlanta until a tentative agreement was reached at the final negotiating session.

Since then, the pilots' Master Executive Council and management have successfully parlayed dozens of letters of agreement and memorandums of understanding to clarify contract terms. As the implementation phase of Contract 2007 finally comes to a close, the Atlantic Southeast pilots understand the importance of being unified, focused, and, most of all, persistent.

The pilots are able to share this recent negotiating experience with other ALPA pilot groups that are preparing for collective bargaining. However, the airline industry is dynamic and ever-changing, and the airline's pilot leaders are also confronting new challenges.

As a Delta Connection carrier and a wholly owned subsidiary of SkyWest, Inc., Atlantic Southeast is one of many express-level airlines that provided feed to either Delta or Northwest. With the merger of these two mainline carriers, Delta management has announced its plans to cut costs and consolidate its regional operations, with only the best performers surviving.

The pilots' leaders are keenly aware that they are in a precarious situation that could potentially encourage management to employ whipsawing tactics to better contain expenditures. These actions could erode pilot contract gains to make individual airlines more attractive to Delta from an operating-cost perspective. The pilots' MEC continuously communicates with the pilots of other Delta Connection and former Northwest Airlink carriers to discuss strategies, share information, and consider ways to collectively protect ALPA pilots.

The pilots also recognize the challenges they all may face as their parent company operates a non-union Delta Connection carrier, SkyWest Airlines. The MEC wants to curb any attempts by management to use this subsidiary as leverage to promote a company culture that is counterproductive to the union. The key to this effort is a regular and open dialogue with the pilots.

To be effective, the MEC understands that it must remain the primary and preferred source of credible information that is provided to pilots and has taken recent steps to assess its communications efforts. With the Association's assistance, the MEC plans to update the pilot group's website, using a virtual office to supplement the MEC's current office in Atlanta; "face time" with pilots attending recurrent training; polling and surveying; text messaging; and other tools.

Enhanced communications will be important as the pilot group prepares for discussions on the preferential bidding system that management insisted on in negotiations. The pilots are proceeding cautiously as they have spent countless hours negotiating very specific terms for a schedule bidding system that serves the airline and, at the same time, meets the needs of the pilots. Pilot leaders want to ensure that the integrity of their current protocols and work rules are maintained.

Despite the pilots' relatively recent contract success, they are already thinking about their next collective bargaining efforts, when their agreement becomes amendable in 2010.

## ASA at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 1,744  
**Headquarters:** Atlanta, Ga.  
**Pilot Base:** Atlanta, Ga.  
**Fleet:** 39 CRJ700s, 110 CRJ200s, and a small number of ATR 72s for shorter-range flights

## CanJet

### CanJet Pilots Ratify First Agreement

**By Lynn Konwin**

ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

**Things are looking up for the pilots of CanJet. In June 2008, they voted to ratify a new collective bargaining agreement—their first as members of ALPA. More than 70 percent of the pilots voted in favor of the agreement, which provides immediate pay increases, new equipment as part of CanJet's fleet renewal program, and a positive projection of the company's plan for future growth.**

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"I would like to thank all of the pilots who voted for making their voices heard," says Capt. Tracey Hyndman, the CanJet pilots' Master Executive Council chairwoman. "Our pilots are convinced that a union contract will help bring more stability to our work lives while maintaining a positive relationship with management. The first contract addresses many of our needs, while still providing management the operational flexibility it needs to compete effectively."

The 4-year agreement provides CanJet with job stability, enabling management to focus full-time on building CanJet as Canada's premier charter airline. "We did a great job maintaining good relations with managements," says Hyndman. "It's a good start."

CanJet currently flies B-737-300s and -800s. As part of its fleet renewal program, CanJet added two -800s in the first half of 2008. Under the terms of the new collective bargaining agreement, the company purchased additional -800s in the second half of 2008. By next winter, CanJet pilots will operate an all-next-generation B-737 fleet that increases fuel efficiency and range while reducing noise and carbon emissions. The -800s will have a seating capacity of 189 passengers and be equipped with a drop-down video system for passengers. CanJet will operate these airplanes on flights from Quebec City and Montreal for the winter charter season.

The CanJet pilots have a brief history as the airline only began operating in September 2000. CanJet then merged with Canada 3000 the following year. As a result of Canada 3000 filing for bankruptcy, CanJet reemerged in 2002 as an independent airline. CanJet pilots became ALPA members in June 2006. [▶](#)



### CJA at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 50

**Operations:** Provides subcontracting services to vacation charter airlines

**Fleet:** 1 B-737-300s and 6 737-800s

**Pilot Bases:** Halifax, N.S.

**Headquarters:** Halifax, N.S.

WIKIPEDIA



## Comair

### Comair Pilots Continue To Look for Solutions

By Jen Lofquist

ALPA Communications Specialist



**With 120 airplanes, 77 destinations, and 511 daily flights, Comair is as big as some of the smaller major airlines.**

The Comair pilots continue to fight for job stability and contract compliance—a task that has proved difficult. In these complicated economic times, Comair pilots have put an emphasis on enforcing the quality-of-life standards in their contract. Recently, management named a new president who has made overtures to ALPA and promises to help improve relations.

“We are hopeful, and the signs are positive, that we can have a more productive relationship with the new management. The Comair pilots have a vested interest in this airline and look forward to having a cooperative relationship with management and helping to take this airline back to its rightful place at the top of the industry,” says Capt. Mark Cirksena, the pilots’ Master Executive Council chairman. “It is our highest priority to protect the quality of life and job of every Comair pilot.”

In the summer of 2008, Comair struggled along with the rest of the U.S. airline industry as jet fuel prices reached record levels. The Delta/Northwest merger raised questions about the future of Comair and its role vis-à-vis the new airline. Comair has continued to face economic hard times, and more than 200 pilots were furloughed in the past year.

ALPA’s history with Comair management can be described in one word: turbulent. In 2001, Comair pilots were forced to strike. No one expected the strike to last 89 days—the longest major airline strike in recent memory. It brought the company to a standstill and allowed the pilots to negotiate an agreement that

was hailed as a benchmark labor contract. The contract brought Comair to the top of the industry in pay and work benefits. Not only was pay increased, the pilots’ relationship with management improved.

But in December 2004, Comair and its pilots faced more difficulties. After a record snowfall hit Cincinnati on December 24, the airline shut down due to scheduling software failing under the strain of all the changes to assignments. Comair had to cancel all of its flights for December 25 and 26, leaving approximately 30,000 passengers stranded. Pilots, however, worked around the computer failure and helped get the airline back up and running.

Yet, the troubles were far from over. Despite receiving concessions from the pilot group to help reorganize its finances, Comair was part of the Delta bankruptcy in September 2005. The company looked to the pilot group to provide further concessions. Negotiations went on and off for more than a year. In early 2007, the pilots agreed to a new contract. This agreement preempted any potential decision from the bankruptcy court to impose a contract.

Though classified as a regional carrier, Comair is the equal of many of the major airlines. With 120 airplanes, 77 destinations, and 511 daily flights, it is as big as some of the smaller major airlines. Based in Erlanger, Ky., Comair flies as Delta Connection and is a wholly owned subsidiary of Delta Air Lines. Comair pilots fly an all-jet fleet of 50-, 70-, and 76-seat CRJs.

Comair began operations in 1977 with just two aircraft. In 1984, it started flying as a Delta Connection carrier and, in 1999, Delta purchased Comair for more than \$2 billion. The Comair pilot group joined ALPA in 1981. 

## CMR at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** Approximately 1,100

**Headquarters:** Erlanger, Ky.

**Fleet:** 92 CRJ200s, 13 CRJ-900s, 15 CRJ700s

**Pilot Domiciles:** Cincinnati, Ohio, and New York, N.Y. (JFK)

**W**ant more proof that ALPA's fee-for-departure strategy works? Look no further than CommutAir, one of ALPA's newest pilot groups and one of the Association's organizing successes of 2008.

CommutAir pilots have felt the effects of management reinventing the company a number of times during the last two decades, replacing its fleet, adding and subtracting routes, and opening and closing pilot domiciles.

Without a union, the airline's 120 pilots had absolutely no job protections.

That changed last year when more than 90 percent of CommutAir pilots voted for ALPA representation and officially joined the Association in May. Since then, the pilots' new officers have been working long hours to build their volunteer structure, says the pilot group's Master Executive Council chairman, Capt. Shawn Marcin.

"Our number one goal is to negotiate our first contract, and everything we do is focused on achieving that goal. In this volatile time in our industry, it's important now more than ever that we have a say in our way of life here at CommutAir," Marcin points out.

CommutAir, celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, was founded in 1989 by a group of investors in upstate New York. Those same founders still run the privately held company, which flies to 21 cities in 9 states.

For its first 11 years, the airline was a USAir Express carrier flying Beech 1900s, primarily within New York and Vermont. At the end of 2000, US Airways abruptly cancelled its codeshare agreement with CommutAir, which then drastically downsized its operations and began a new codeshare agreement with


Continental and started operating out of hubs in Albany and Boston. When those hubs proved unprofitable, CommutAir changed focus again and in 2003 began moving its operations to the Midwest, opening a base at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport.

In 2006 CommutAir replaced its Beech 1900D fleet with 16 Bombardier Dash 8 Q200s. But when Continental announced it would slash service and furlough 3,000 employees, CommutAir employees were forced to adapt once again. To conform to Continental's downsizing, CommutAir opened a new hub at Newark in October 2008 and inaugurated new service to seven northeastern markets.

"Management opened the Newark domicile without adding more staff, and it has had a huge adverse effect on our schedules. There's been a profound strain on our system and personal lives, which makes getting contractual scheduling language on paper more important than ever," says Marcin.

Just 6 months after having no union at all, the MEC has grown rapidly. The group's newly elected officers attended an ALPA mini-leadership conference in October 2008, and the negotiators learned the nuts and bolts of bargaining at ALPA negotiating training that month. Scheduling and communications volunteers have been appointed, and an online negotiating survey was commis-

sioned so that line pilots could tell the MEC what they want to see in their contract.

"It's amazing to see the things other pilot groups have in their contractual language that we can strive for and look forward to now as well. We have to create a grievance process, build a pay and benefits package, and make management think of the employees first when it develops schedules. It's a daunting process, but we have the benefit of tapping the knowledge and experience of our ALPA staff and our fellow express pilots, which is a huge help," Marcin says. "We're on our way." 

## CommutAir

### CommutAir Pilots: Starting Over

**By Rusty Ayers**

ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**CommutAir MEC officers, from left, Capt. Travis Jordan, secretary-treasurer; Capt. Shawn Marcin, chairman; F/O Jay Dougherty, vice-chairman; and Jeff MacDonald, manager of ALPA's Representation Department, attended a mini-leadership conference in Herndon, Va., in October.**

### CMT at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 120

**Fleet:** 16 Bombardier Dash 8 Q200s

**Services:** A Continental Connection carrier since 2000, CommutAir provides scheduled service to 21 cities in 8 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada. The airline has a hub at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport and recently opened a second hub at Newark Liberty International Airport

## Continental

### Continental Pilots: A Successful Product Of Change

By ALPA Staff



**Continental pilots have an updated strategic plan in place designed to achieve a leading contract that will improve the lives of Continental pilots and raise the bar throughout the airline industry.**

### CAL at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 4,879

**Pilot Bases/Hubs:** Newark, N.J.; Houston, Tex.; Cleveland, Ohio; Guam

**Headquarters:** Houston, Tex.

**Fleet:** 20 B-777-200ERs (plus 8 on order), 26 B-767-200ER/-400ERs, 58 B-757-200/-300s (plus 4 used airplanes on order), 251 B-737-300/-500/-700/-800/-900/-900ERs (plus 30 on order), 25 B-787-8/9s on order

The Continental pilots come from a diverse collection of merged airlines—Texas International, Frontier, People Express, New York Air, Air Micronesia, and four commuter carriers that formed Continental Express (now ExpressJet). Not surprisingly, the dynamics of that many groups has created challenges. Despite these challenges, the Continental pilots have prevailed throughout their history: they survived a 761-day strike, multiple bankruptcies and Frank Lorenzo, and rebuilt their union from the ground up to eventually merge back into ALPA in 2001.

Unity is the cornerstone of the success of any pilot group, and like most within the airline industry, the Continental pilots' unity was tested with a concessionary agreement in April 2005. The preparations for that contract had begun with high expectations and more than 400 pilots at an opening-day rally in Houston. However, the subsequent bankruptcies at Delta, Northwest, United, and US Airways led Continental's management to demand concessions.

Pilot opinions were mixed regarding the need for and composition of such an agreement. When the vote was tallied, the agreement had been ratified by a slim margin. With significant concessions that included 8.9 percent wage rate reductions, a new preferential bidding system, work rule modifications and freezing of the A Plan, along with new provisions for a B Plan, stock grants, and profit-sharing, the agreement and process left a rift in the pilot group.

Still, for every step back, the pilots took two steps forward. Continental resumed its growth, not only hiring back all its furloughed pilots, but because of the efforts of the MEC, also hiring a substantial number of pilots from ExpressJet and furlougees from other airlines whose pilots ALPA represents. Through persistence, the MEC managed to produce other enviable successes.

In 2007, the Continental MEC turned down management's offer for a contract extension and instead secured an agreement to begin early negotiations for an entirely new contract. At the outset, the MEC's "on time" campaign, formulated as a result of intensive strategic planning, worked well.

Unprecedented early openers in the spring of 2007 were designed to achieve as much as possible in the non-economic sections of the contract before full Section 6 negotiations began in April 2008.

In March 2008, Continental pilots held their first informational picketing event in more than a decade, and it was massive. Almost 500 pilots marched on Wall Street in one of ALPA's most impressive events to date. In June, the pilots demonstrated that their resolve and ability to unify was no one-time stroke of luck. An informational picket on the steps of Continental's headquarters in Houston brought out even more pilots than the New York event—514 to be exact. FamilyAwareness events, attended by hundreds of pilots and their families, followed in Cleveland and Houston.

Success continued when the Association negotiated an agreement to mitigate approximately three-quarters of management's announced pilot furloughs. Contained within that letter of agreement was the first "early retirement window," which provided financial incentives for Continental pilots.

Airline industry merger activity, sky-high oil prices, and the work on furlough mitigation have delayed negotiations. Nonetheless, strategies and personnel have continually adapted to position the pilots for future success, while the early-opener strategy has provided the necessary flexibility to slow negotiations until more favorable conditions materialize. Negotiations are now set to resume at full pace starting in January 2009.

Despite the challenges, the Continental pilots have an updated strategic plan designed to achieve a leading contract that will improve the lives of Continental pilots and raise the bar throughout the airline industry. In addition, the Continental pilots have shown their willingness to "get in the game" in large numbers to provide the leverage and influence that their MEC and Negotiating Committee need. 🌐



## Delta

### The Delta Pilots: Seasons of Change

By **Kelly C. Regus**, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

**The recent successes of the Delta pilots are widely varied and include a historic joint venture protocol agreement with Air France pilots and a joint collective bargaining agreement with the Northwest pilots.**



When Delta filed for Chapter 11 on Sept. 14, 2005, the only thing that remained firm for the next few years was the Delta Master Executive Council's commitment to proactive strategic planning. This commitment is responsible for the successes achieved, against all odds, in the midst of a historic domestic financial crisis and industry challenges. These successes include averting a contract rejection; defeating a hostile takeover attempt; negotiating a \$2.1 billion bankruptcy claim and an additional \$650 million in notes; and most recently, obtaining contractual improvements, job protections, and becoming the fourth largest equity holder in the company upon merger closure, a labor first.

The pilots' MEC chairman, Capt. Lee Moak, sent a letter to members on Oct. 7, 2005, articulating the MEC's goal, "to work for a profitable airline with a long-term future that will provide all Delta pilots with a stable, healthy career." To navigate through the challenges of bankruptcy, 1113 hearings, pension plan termination, and hostile takeover attempts, the strategy would have to be anchored and focused.

Over the next few years, the pilots and the union leaders tirelessly drove home the message that they were stakeholders who could not only prevent a deal, but could also participate in a deal in which success for the pilot group could also translate into success for the company.

In November 2006, US Airways announced a hostile takeover bid for Delta Air Lines. After an exhaustive and thorough analysis by union leaders, they concluded that the merger was not in the best interest of the two corporations, their employees, or the traveling public; but most important, it was not in the best interests of the Delta pilots. Instead it would create short-term gain for a small number of profiteers. Every resource of the Delta MEC was directed at stopping the takeover attempt. At a huge ALPA-organized employee rally, a message was sent that reverberated across the country, all the way to US Airways' Phoenix headquarters: Keep Delta Our

Delta. US Airways withdrew the hostile takeover bid 6 weeks later.

The Delta pilots' innovative strategy mattered. The Delta pilots were relevant. Reporter Ted Reed of The Street.com wrote, "If there's going to be consolidation in the airline industry, it most likely will have to go right through Lee Moak, and he's not going to make it easy." However, economic pressure was building for a merger, and Moak stated in a letter to Delta pilots on Jan. 18, 2007, that "the Delta pilots are interested in participating in the 'right' consolidation effort.... The 'right' merger opportunity could draw our support and result in a successful merger." The strategy in place for months was now playing out. Delta pilots were now positioned to participate at the front end if any of the much-publicized merger rumors came to fruition, where they could reap significant financial returns for the value they provided to a merger. This success was achieved when the Delta/Northwest corporate closure took effect Oct. 30, 2008. Northwest is now a wholly owned subsidiary pending full operational integration in the next 12 months.

The recent successes of the Delta pilots are widely varied and include a historic joint venture protocol agreement with Air France pilots and a joint collective bargaining agreement with the Northwest pilots, which went into effect upon the close of the corporate merger.

It is a tremendous challenge for a union to establish relevancy, but that is especially true in today's harsh business climate. The Delta union leaders still face the challenge of integrating diverse pilot groups into the largest unified pilot group in the industry. The future success of the merged MEC will continue to rely on aggressive engagement with government and regulatory agencies, the business community, and with Delta management at all levels. As the industry continues to change, there is one constant: the Delta MEC will remain relevant. 🌐

## DAL at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 12,555 (7,382 Delta and 5,173 Northwest)

**Operations:** Delta and its Northwest subsidiary fly domestically and internationally to more than 375 destinations in 66 countries (includes Delta Connection carriers)

**Pilot Bases:** Atlanta, Cincinnati, Los Angeles, New York, Salt Lake City, Anchorage\*, Detroit\*, Seattle\*, Memphis\*, Minneapolis-St. Paul\*

**Hub Cities:** Atlanta, Cincinnati, Detroit\*, Memphis\*, Minneapolis-St. Paul\*, New York-JFK, Salt Lake City, and Tokyo-Narita\*

**Headquarters:** Atlanta, Ga.

**Equipment:** MD-88s, MD-90s, B-737s, B-757-767s, B-777s, A319s\*, A320s\*, A330s\*, B-757s\*, B-747s\*, DC-9s\*

The statistics marked with an asterisk (\*) reflect those that pertain to Northwest.

## ExpressJet

### ExpressJet Pilots Take Lickin', Keep on Ticking'

By **Jim Moody**, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



ExpressJet flies 235 EMB-145s as Continental Express.

### XJT at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 2,400

**Operations:** Flies more than 40,000 passengers per day to 125 destinations in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean

**Bases:** Houston, Tex.; Newark, N.J.; and Cleveland, Ohio

**Fleet:** 235 EMB-145 LRs and XRs

**Headquarters:** Houston, Tex.

Today's ExpressJet is a far cry from the turboprop carrier that Continental Airlines cobbled together from several commuter airlines in the early 1990s to create its feeder line, Continental Express. In 1993 the National Mediation Board determined that Continental and Continental Express were a single carrier, and the pilots voted for union representation in one of the highest voter participation turnouts, completely rejecting years of anti-union management efforts to remain non-union. In June 2001, the IACP Board of Directors and members voted to merge with ALPA, and the two Continental groups initially had a single Master Executive Council.

During the spring of 2002, Continental spun off Continental Express through an initial public offering, with the resulting company becoming ExpressJet Airlines.

In August 2004, shortly before the ExpressJet pilots approved their last full contract in December, the Continental and ExpressJet pilot groups separated, and each elected its own MEC. Early in 2006, Continental elected to exercise its option to remove 69 airliners from the capacity purchase agreement (CPA) with ExpressJet and give the flying to another carrier.

Rather than return those airliners to Continental, ExpressJet management decided to use them to move the airline in other directions, such as charter flying, self-branding, and flying for other legacy airlines. Although initially facing a real possibility of concessions, the MEC and Negotiating Committee worked with management to focus instead on locking in expenses past 2008, when the pilots' contract would become amendable. Doing so would make a better case for the airline's labor stability and still lock in predictable labor costs for 4 more years, while management sought new business opportunities and financing.

Therefore, in November 2006, after hard but successful negotiations, the pilots approved a letter of agreement (LOA) that extended their contract by 2 years, until Nov. 30, 2010. Along with an entirely new charter section, the LOA contained pay increases and scheduling improvements that placed ExpressJet pilots at the top of their segment of the U.S. airline industry.

"ExpressJet management was basically reinventing the airline, and we had to reinvent ourselves as well," says Capt. Bill Dressler, the ExpressJet pilots' MEC chairman. "Both sides anticipated that as the airline evolved, the contract and new charter provisions would provide both the stability and flexibility needed to meet unexpected new challenges."

Unfortunately, a sudden surge in fuel prices and the attendant economic slump not only cut into ExpressJet's profits, but also those of the carriers with which ExpressJet had CPAs. As those airliners pulled down their mainline flying, the demand for ExpressJet's contract services disappeared.

With the support of ALPA's president, Capt. John Prater, and the Continental pilots' MEC chairman, Capt. Jay Pierce, Continental and ExpressJet managements finally reached agreement on a new CPA, one that retained the 205 aircraft ExpressJet was flying as Continental Express but seriously reduced ExpressJet revenue. ExpressJet management then turned to its employee groups, including the pilots, and asked for concessions.

Working with management, the pilot group helped formulate a plan incorporating early outs, personal leaves of absence, cost-of-living adjustments, and 40-hour lines that greatly mitigated furloughs.

Four weeks later, on Oct. 31, 2008, ExpressJet pilots ratified a concessionary letter of agreement that included modest scheduled pay reductions and the foregoing of certain scheduled raises.

Thirty-nine of the original 69 retained airliners have been returned to Continental under the terms of the new CPA. The remaining 30 are being used as charter flying operations are expanded.

Without the excellent working relationship that exists between management and the pilot group, the last few months at ExpressJet would almost certainly have been much more difficult. 🌐

## Hawaiian

### Hawaiian Pilots Poised For Growth, Contract Gains

By **Rusty Ayers**, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



Founded in 1929, Hawaiian celebrates its 80th birthday this year.

It's a good time for Hawaiian Airlines to take advantage of market opportunities to prosper, thanks to planned fleet acquisitions that will greatly expand its route structure and the shutdown of some of its transpacific and inter-island routes. According to news reports, the airline is acquiring new A330-200s, allowing the airline to transition to a new long-range fleet 2 years earlier than planned. This news would seem to be positive for both management and the pilots during ongoing Section 6 contract negotiations. But management is acting schizophrenic.

"When you hear what senior management says to Wall Street one moment and then says to the employees the next, you're surprised they don't get whiplash. There is a complete disconnect between the two messages," says the pilot group's Master Executive Council chairman, Capt. Eric Sampson. "The Wall Street message is very positive while the message to employees is doom and gloom. Fortunately, ALPA's Economic & Financial Analysis Department is able to confirm that the real picture looks much more like the one that management is painting for Wall Street."

The pilots have been negotiating with Hawaiian management for their first contract in nearly a decade that hasn't been pressured by bankruptcy. But after more than 19 months of standard negotiations—including private mediation—management stubbornly refuses to acknowledge that the airline is in much better shape than most of its peers. In December 2008, mediated negotiations began under the auspices of the National Mediation Board.

Even at the height of the oil crisis last summer, Hawaiian was still able to eke out a narrow profit. The airline is expected to do even better now that fuel costs have subsided. The airline has a reported \$4 billion order for new Airbus A330s and A350s to supplement and replace its aging B-767-300s. It recently accelerated its fleet acquisition program to lease more A330s and bring them into service starting in 2010, a year earlier than planned. Hawaiian has also added four B-717s to its interisland fleet and has recalled all its furloughed pilot and has hired more pilots, including a number of former Aloha Airlines pilots.


Hawaiian continues to thrive in a competitive market that had seen two of its major opponents, Aloha and ATA Airlines, go out of business in 2007. But pilot negotiators at the airline say management is still holding to virtually the same demands it was making months ago.

"It's frustrating because our requests are very reasonable, and we have already adjusted our expectations in recognition of the weak economy," explains the pilots' Negotiating Committee chairman, Capt. Jim Giddings.

A new competitor in Hawaii's cutthroat interisland market is Republic Airlines, which recently wet-leased ERJ170s and crews to Honolulu-based

Mokulele Airlines. Mokulele had previously partnered with Mesa Air's interisland carrier go! and both Mokulele and Mesa are now suing each other for breach of contract.

Hawaiian's long-term plans focus on expanding service both east and west when Hawaiian's new long-range Airbuses arrive little more than a year from now. To achieve success, the airline must first reach an agreement with its pilots, who are ramping up their Strategic Preparedness Committee in case management continues to stall.

"Our airline has been profitable in good times and bad, while the pilots are still operating under the terms of a concessionary bankruptcy agreement from 2005," Sampson says. "Hawaiian has heavily invested in new aircraft and other systems. Senior management employees have enjoyed bonuses and increased salaries. It's time management makes an investment in its people, too." 

### HAL at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 409

**Fleet:** 14 B-767-300ERs, 4 B-767-300s, 15 B-717-200s. On order: 15 A330s and 12 A350XWBs

**Services:** As the only transpacific carrier based in the Hawaiian Islands, Hawaiian's widebody fleet flies to 17 destinations throughout the South Pacific and the West Coast, including Tahiti, Samoa, Australia, and the Philippines. The inter-island fleet provides essential service for kama'aina (Hawaiian residents) and visitors alike between the islands of Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii



## Island Air

### Island Air Pilots Look For Contract Closure

By Lydia Jakub

ALPA Communications Specialist



Island Air pilots are engaged in protracted contract negotiations with management that have lasted more than a year. The puzzling detail is that contract negotiations initially progressed smoothly and were nearing end game when management conducted an abrupt one-eighty.

“Management’s turnabout at the table is disconcerting,” says the pilots’ Master Executive Council chairman, Capt. Charlie Cizek. “We will not allow the quality of our contract to be eroded, especially when Island Air should be profiting from lower fuel costs and higher yields.”

The Island Air pilots’ contract became amendable on Nov. 30, 2007. Recognizing that they fly in a leisure market, the pilots and management negotiated a short-term agreement that would help the company through the crisis of declining tourism and rising fuel prices. The parties made substantial headway, agreeing to incremental improvements to the pilots’ contract without concessions and were nearing the end of negotiations when management suddenly began to stall the talks, made outrageous demands, and unilaterally decided to reopen previously agreed-upon sections.

Island Air, a privately owned company, has gone through several changes in management over the past few years. The erratic behavior at the bargaining table is just the latest in a long list of stop-and-go decisions made by Island Air management. Recently, Island Air bid on and won an essential air service (EAS)

contract awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation in May 2008. The next month, management announced that it would relinquish the contract, citing rising fuel costs and a desire to focus on the local market in Hawaii. Yet when given the opportunity to grow in the local market due to the unfortunate demise of another carrier, Island Air management decided not to compete but rather to focus on its core business of flying in and out of smaller airports not served by jets.

Additionally, the company had at one time acquired three Bombardier Dash 8 Q400s. Only one of these 78 seaters was ever put into service. Island Air canceled delivery of the remaining

two Q400s and soon abandoned the project altogether. Management apparently concluded it did not wish to operate these larger aircraft in what was then an extremely competitive interisland market.

The pilots have repeatedly asked to be briefed on management’s future plans for the company; however, those plans appear to be very much in flux.

“Recent meetings with management have whittled down the number of open items on the table; however, we are preparing to use every legal avenue available to ensure that our contract is protected and our wages and work rules are improved upon,” concludes Cizek. 🌐

## AIS at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** Approximately 64

**Operations:** Approximately 50 daily flights plus charter service to all eight major airports in Hawaii; more nonstop, point-to-point service than any other airline in Hawaii

**Fleet:** Four Dash 8-100s

**Service:** Island Air is Hawaii’s leading regional carrier, serving airports on all major Hawaiian Islands with more than 444 weekly flights between the Islands of Oahu, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, Kauai, and the island of Hawaii

## Mesa Air Group

### Mesa Pilots Ratify New Contract

By Lydia Jakub

ALPA Communications Specialist



**The Mesa Air Group pilots' new agreement includes minimum days off, "scheduled or actual" flight pay on a segment-by-segment basis, full cancellation pay, and equipment pay protection with a full line guarantee provision.**

### MAG at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** Nearly 1,600

**Pilot Bases:** Charlotte, N.C.; Chicago, Ill.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Denver, Colo.; Grand Junction, Colo.; Honolulu, Hawaii; Kahului, Hawaii; Kona, Hawaii; Lihue, Hawaii; Phoenix, Ariz.; New York, N.Y.; and Washington, D.C.

**Headquarters:** Phoenix, Ariz.

**Fleet:** 38 CRJ900s, 20 CRJ700s, 60 CRJ100s/200s, 34 ERJ-145s, 16 Dash 8-200s

After years of toiling under a substandard contract, the Mesa Air Group pilots recently ratified a new agreement with numerous industry-standard and industry-leading provisions.

"This new agreement is a step forward for all Mesa pilots," says the pilots' Master Executive Council chairman, Capt. Kevin Wilson. "It contains significant quality-of-life and other improvements in line with or above industry average. And unlike our last contract in which we were forced to sacrifice pay and work rules to achieve industry-leading scope language and put an end to management's whipsawing tactics, nothing was sacrificed and no concessions were made for this contract."

"Given the financial state of our company, getting a contract with significant improvements and no concessions was no small feat," adds the Negotiating Committee chairman, Capt. Albert Montoya. "At times, we felt as if we were trying to get blood from a stone; but we are the lifeblood of this airline, and we were determined to achieve a contract that provides necessary improvements immediately and gets us back to the table in 21 months."

Negotiations for the Mesa Air Group pilots have historically been anything but typical; and when the pilots' contract became amendable in September 2007, the MEC decided to pursue an expedited process for a short-term agreement that would significantly improve the lives of their pilots, attract and retain professional pilots, and place the Mesa pilots at the forefront of the next bargaining cycle.

After just 10 months of negotiations, the Negotiating Committee reached a tentative agreement with management. On Oct. 2, 2008, the MEC approved the TA and sent it to the full membership for ratification.

On Dec. 10, 2008, the pilots ratified the agreement, which includes increased minimum days off, "scheduled or actual" flight pay on a segment-by-segment basis, full cancellation pay, and equipment pay protection with a full line guarantee provision. In addition, pilots will have more control over their schedules as a result of a preferential bidding system and the schedule adjustment period. All of this and more was discussed during the 26 roadshows, seven pilot-wide confer-

ence calls, a video presentation, and numerous communications answering questions and addressing rumors.

Getting to this point has not been without its challenges. Frustrated by management's sometimes blatant disregard for the current contract, more than 700 pilots left the airline in a 20-month period in search of better career opportunities. The MEC made clear to management that drastic changes in how it conducted business would need to be made if it wanted to improve labor relations and achieve a contract. Additionally, the state of the industry and the company's precarious financial state continue to raise significant concerns for the pilots.

While pilot negotiators were at the table with management, the MEC launched the MAG Pilots United campaign to build unity and demonstrate the pilots' commitment to a fair contract. As part of this effort, MEC members and Pilot-to-Pilot© volunteers personally handed out blue ribbon pins stating, "One Goal, One Voice," and spoke with the pilots one-to-one about the campaign.

As of press time, the Mesa Air Group pilots are working with management to implement the various contract provisions that will require time to set up, including the new line guarantee, scheduled or actual, moving to a calendar month for bidding, and a preferential bidding system. Concurrently, the pilot group will begin preparations for their next round of contract negotiations, which will begin in September 2010. 🌐

## Mesaba

### Mesaba Pilots Shed Baggage, Experience New Growth

By John Perkinson  
ALPA Staff Writer



The flow-through arrangement that Mesaba had with Northwest is now part of the Delta pilot agreement.

### MSA at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 1,117  
**Headquarters:** Eagan, Minn., approximately 5 miles east of Minneapolis/St. Paul International Airport  
**Fleet:** 49 Saab SF340s, 17 50-passenger Bombardier CRJ200s, and 36 76-passenger Bombardier CRJ900s (with 15 more scheduled for delivery between January and May 2009)  
**Pilot Bases:** Minneapolis/St. Paul, Detroit, and Memphis

Mesaba Pilots have seen their share of union-busting efforts. They have faced a bevy of challenges, including the use of a holding company to siphon resources and the creation of a new airline to apply classic whipsawing tactics. Mesaba's bankruptcy filing in October 2005 further exacerbated matters. However, the agreement that the pilots and management finally approved in December 2006 contained snapback clauses and other enhancements based on company performance, which are now being realized.

"We've turned a corner," says Capt. Mark Nagel, the Mesaba pilots' Master Executive Council chairman. "It was a hard fight, but because of the efforts of our MEC, negotiators, and ALPA staff advisors, we are now recovering wages and work rules, and looking at pay increases.

"Ironically, even though we agreed to a 15 percent reduction in labor costs, the pilots who were here at the time of the bankruptcy are actually receiving more cash (as a result of the claim payout) than they would have if we had never agreed to take the concessions," Nagel observes.

The vision and fortitude of the pilots of this Northwest Airlink carrier (now a wholly owned subsidiary of Delta Air Lines, with the completion of the Northwest merger) serve as a prototype for other ALPA member groups facing the threat of extinction. Mesaba's parent company, Mair Holdings, purchased Big Sky Airlines and used Mesaba's profits to subsidize the new operation and to line the pockets of those who operated the holding company. After the 2005 bankruptcy filing at Northwest Airlines, Mesaba followed suit, filing for Chapter 11 and initiating the 1113(c) process to abrogate its labor contracts.

The Mesaba pilots fought tooth and nail, arguing their case in court, winning two of the three 1113(c) trials. They rallied their members and solicited help from fellow ALPA pilots at other airlines. Recognizing that strength comes from unity, the Mesaba pilot group also formed a coalition with the Mesaba chapters of the Association of Flight Attendants and the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association. The coalition unions engaged in pattern bargaining, which thwarted management's divide-and-conquer strategy.

Management's original asking price of \$39 million in pilot costs was trimmed to \$15 million, and the other labor groups negotiated comparable concessions. With these new agreements, the situation began to change for the Midwest carrier. Mair sold Mesaba to Northwest in April 2007, closed Big Sky operations in March 2008, and finally shut down the operation in July.

Today, Mesaba is hiring employees and purchasing airplanes, acquiring 15 additional CRJ900s between January and May 2009. These new aircraft will be positioned in Atlanta, as the airline transitions from a Northwest Airlink operator to a Delta Connection carrier.

"During the bankruptcy, 500 pilots left Mesaba because of furloughs or new opportunities acquired through ALPA's successful Job Fair Campaign," says Nagel. "When the airline began issuing recall notices, only 77 furloughed pilots returned. For many of the hundreds of other new pilots hired to fill the void, this is their first airline job and first exposure to a union," he points out.

Part of the MEC's mission is to educate these new members about the purpose and benefits of ALPA representation, to instill a sense of labor culture among the larger pilot group.

Explaining labor issues and the collective bargaining process will grow in importance as the Mesaba pilots prepare for their next set of contract negotiations. Their current agreement becomes amendable in June 2012.

Like their peers at comparably sized airlines, the Mesaba pilots continue to contend with fatigue, contract enforcement issues, and other pilot concerns. However, since Mesaba's emergence from bankruptcy, its departure from Mair Holdings, and acquiring its new role at Delta Air Lines, the MEC has been working on mending the battered relationship between management and its organized employees. Despite a clouded recent history, the Mesaba pilots may have found their elusive silver lining. ☺



## Midwest

### Midwest Pilots Wage Strategic Campaign to Protect Their Jobs

By **Barbara Gottshalk**, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**Midwest pilots showed their support for MEC chairman, Capt. Jay Schnedorf (second from right), when he addressed the Executive Board in September about their airline management's efforts to replace the fleet of B-717s with Embraer 170s and to outsource Midwest pilot jobs.**

### MEA at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 400  
**Operations:** Nonstop jet service to the East and West Coasts and a number of destinations in-between  
**Pilot Base:** Milwaukee, Wisc.  
**Headquarters:** Milwaukee, Wisc.  
**Equipment:** B-717s (99 seats)

“Imagine starting contract negotiations with a 30-day cooling off period. That’s essentially what our pilot group has gone through since September,” says F/O Greg Uselmann, the Midwest pilots’ Master Executive Council vice-chairman. That’s when, just days after management and the MEC had exchanged Section 6 notices, Midwest Airlines announced a deal with Republic Airways that replaced all but nine of the B-717s flown by Midwest pilots with EMB-170s flown by Republic flight crews. As a result, nearly 300 of the 400 pilots employed by Midwest will lose or have lost their jobs.

Fortunately, the MEC was prepared to respond to this violation of the pilots’ contract. It had the committee and volunteer structure, the staff and financial resources, and the communications vehicles in place to face this unforeseen challenge. “Our Coordinating Team was already up to speed on the issues, our history, and our negotiations goals, which made it easier to obtain valuable input, make quick but informed decisions, and communicate to the pilot group in a timely manner,” Uselmann explains.

Most importantly, the Coordinating Team had a plan. “Having a long-range plan proved to be really critical as we dealt with a number of issues including the outsourcing of our jobs at the same time we were gearing up for Section 6,” says the pilots’ MEC chairman, Capt. Jay Schnedorf. “With our team comprised of the MEC, our committee chairmen and pilot volunteers, ALPA staff, and outside counsel in place, we were able to take on each issue as it came up, while continuing our negotiations prep,” he added.

The MEC began preparing for Section 6 negotiations a full 2 years ahead of the pilots’ Aug. 31, 2008, contract amendable date by establishing a Strategic Planning Committee (SPC). The pilot leaders conducted a poll of the members in the fall of 2006 and a follow-up web survey in 2007 to ensure that the MEC’s contract goals were in line with pilot interests.

In January 2008, the outlook for addressing pilot contractual concerns through negotiations held promise: the airline was hiring pilots, Midwest Air Group (the airline’s holding company) was purchased by TPG Capital with Northwest as a minority investor (after fending off a hostile takeover attempt by AirTran), and union leaders had begun a positive dialogue with the new chief operating officer. The Midwest MEC and Negotiating Committee began strategic planning in earnest, setting up their Family Awareness and Pilot-to-Pilot® (P2P) Committees and Coordinating Team. They also reviewed the comprehensive report and recommendations of the Contract Study Committee, developed a strategic communications plan for contract negotiations, and trained and deployed P2P volunteers.

Then, the outlook dimmed. Midwest management used skyrocketing fuel prices as the rationale for implementing a “restructuring” plan that included grounding the entire MD-80 fleet, furloughing and downgrading pilots, and asking the pilots for steep concessions. In addition, the proposed Delta/Northwest merger led to concerns about the potential effect on the Midwest pilot group. All of this happened before the announced outsourcing of their jobs.

Sounding the call to “hold management accountable for its contractual obligations to this pilot group,” the MEC and Coordinating Team took on the fight to protect Midwest pilots’ jobs with all of the coordination and finesse of a well-planned military operation. They developed a multi-pronged strategy that focused on the key areas of grievance and legal actions; communications, including SPC activities, news media relations, and community outreach; and a legislative initiative. A number of pilots volunteered to work on these projects.

Heading into a new year, the pilots face an uncertain future. As of press time, they await an arbitrator’s decision on their outsourcing grievance. Section 6 negotiations continue. Elections for new status representatives and a secretary-treasurer are under way. But whatever the challenge—airline restructuring, furloughs, or negotiating with a hostile management—Midwest pilots will be prepared to fight for their jobs and for their future goals. 🌐

The Piedmont pilots are deep in preparations as their contract becomes amendable on May 17, 2009. The Master Executive Council's Negotiating Committee is eager to start talks and is looking to build consensus among the pilots and set contract goals. The MEC has been polling pilots—both formally and informally—to assess the issues that matter most to the pilot group as a whole. Piedmont pilots are also working with pilots from other regional airlines, especially the other US Airways Express carriers, to discuss how issues and solutions can be shared across pilot groups.

## Piedmont

### Piedmont Pilots Prepare for Talks

By Jen Lofquist

ALPA Communications Specialist

In January 2006, Piedmont agreed to quality-of-life improvements to the current contract. This agreement included scheduling and reserve-duty enhancements, additional vacation protections, new groundwork for increased automation, and other extras for the pilots. These agreements were seen as acknowledging the pilots for their commitment to their airline's parent company, US Airways, which declared bankruptcy in 2004.

Piedmont's 500 pilots are spread across five councils and six domiciles. This distance poses a challenge for the pilot group. The group communicates in a quarterly mailed newsletter as well as via e-mail updates and VARS messages.

Piedmont Airlines is one of the oldest airlines in the United States, dating back to 1931. The pilot group joined ALPA in 1952. The result of a multitude of mergers and acquisitions, today's Piedmont combines the former Henson Avia-

**Piedmont flies 55 DHC-8s (Dash 8s) to 55 destinations—carrying more than 3 million passengers per year.**



tion, Allegheny Commuter, and Piedmont Regional. It operates as one of the 10 US Airways Express carriers.

Today, Piedmont flies 55 DHC-8s (Dash 8s) to 55 destinations—carrying more than 3 million passengers per year. The Dash 8s are well-suited to the regional nature of Piedmont's flying. This became even more apparent during the summer of 2008 as fuel costs hit unprecedented levels.

Turboprops use less fuel than jets. Even though the Dash 8s cruise at lower speeds and altitude than jets, these differences are negligible because of the short legs the Piedmont pilots usually fly. Piedmont weathered recent fuel price hikes thanks to the airline's lower cost structure. With the help of its pilots, Piedmont is an energy-efficient airline that can maneuver successfully in a turbulent industry. 🌐

## PDT at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 497

**Headquarters:** Salisbury, Md.

**Fleet:** 55 DHC-8s

**Pilot Domiciles:** New Bern, N.C.; Charlottesville, Va.; Roanoke, Va.; New York, N.Y. (JFK); Harrisburg, Pa.; Salisbury, Md.

## Pinnacle

### Pinnacle Pilots Endure Prolonged Contract Negotiations

By Kimberly Seitz

ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

Pinnacle Airlines' pilots know what it feels like to be on the tip of the proverbial spear. They should—they've been there for 4 years as they patiently wait to conclude contentious contract negotiations. This effort includes an attempt at early negotiations conducted at the behest of airline management in July 2004. The National Mediation Board placed the negotiations in abeyance in the summer of 2008. The Pinnacle pilots are still waiting for a new collective bargaining agreement. The pilots, backed by their Master Executive Council and negotiators, stand ready to resume mediated negotiations as soon as the Board directs talks to begin.

Guided by a comprehensive strategic plan developed by a coordinating team of key pilot leaders, Pinnacle pilots implemented an overall communications strategy that updates the pilots on what is happening at the negotiating table. Combining a strategic preparedness plan with unity-building activities, such as informational picketing and family awareness events, pilot volunteers have focused on one specific goal: attaining an industry-standard contract that recognizes Pinnacle Airlines as a career destination and *not* just a waypoint to a major airline.

The pilots overwhelmingly expressed their unity and resolve in late 2007 when more than 99 percent of responding pilots voted to authorize their elected union representatives to conduct a lawful withdrawal of service if contract talks with management do not result in an agreement and the NMB releases both sides to economic self-help.

Awarded a \$2 million grant from ALPA's Major Contingency Fund, Pinnacle

union leaders used this ALPA resource to open a strike operations center in Minneapolis (where the majority of Pinnacle pilot volunteers reside and are domiciled), leased a billboard near the Memphis airport, and developed new communications tools to keep the pilots informed. They launched their public website, <http://pinnacle.alpa.org>, which outlines the plight of Pinnacle pilots and their contract goals, during the summer of 2008.

Under the name Northwest Airlink, the carrier flies Canadair CRJ200s from bases in Detroit, Mich.; Memphis, Tenn.; and Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.; and provides Delta Connection service on Canadair CRJ900s out of its newest Atlanta base.

Pinnacle Airlines, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Pinnacle Airlines Corporation, which operates Pinnacle Airlines, continues to be profitable, despite higher fuel prices and major scheduling cutbacks at other carriers.

Pinnacle announced in the summer of 2008 that its 10-



In May 2008 Capt. John Prater, center front, and Capt. Scott Erickson, Pinnacle's MEC chairman, to Prater's right, joined nearly 150 pilots and others to stage a protest in front of Pinnacle's headquarters so that management would stop stalling and negotiate a pilot contract.

year air services agreement signed with Northwest Airlines in December 2006 will be honored by the newly merged Delta/Northwest airlines.

### PCL at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 1,200+  
**Operations:** 750 daily flights to 138 U.S. and Canadian destinations; feeder service for Northwest and Delta  
**Pilot Domiciles:** Atlanta, Ga.; Detroit, Mich.; Memphis, Tenn.; Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.  
**Headquarters:** Memphis, Tenn.  
**Equipment:** Canadair CRJ200s and Canadair CRJ900s

The purchase of Colgan Air by Pinnacle Airlines Corporation shifted the focus of the Pinnacle pilots' negotiations to stronger scope language to protect their flying while they actively support the Colgan pilot efforts to vote for ALPA representation.

Despite the slowing economy and the arduous wait, Pinnacle pilots are poised to achieve improvements in their contract: higher pay, an improved retirement package, and better work rules. 🌐



## PSA

### PSA Pilots Gear Up for Contract Negotiations

By David Fisher, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**The pilots of PSA and its fellow subsidiary—Piedmont—are working closely together toward a collective bargaining agreement to tackle pilot flow-through between the wholly owned carriers and US Airways mainline and on other issues of joint interest.**

### PSA at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 400+  
**Corporate Setup:** Wholly owned subsidiary of US Airways  
**Operations:** More than 370 daily flights between 64 destinations, including US Airways hub operations in Charlotte, Philadelphia, New York, and Washington, D.C.  
**Pilot Bases:** Dayton, Ohio; Charlotte, N.C.; and Knoxville, Tenn.  
**Fleet:** 35 Bombardier CRJ200s and 14 CRJ700s

The many twists and turns of PSA and its pilot group throughout their rich history together reflect the turbulent and ever-changing nature of the U.S. domestic airline market. New technology, increased expectations from the legacy carrier they serve, and radical changes in the aviation industry economy have forced this airline to adapt to the current economic conditions.

Today's PSA operates a fleet of state-of-the-art airplanes, flown by well-trained pilots. The airline has reached this enviable position because of its ability to adapt and the willingness of its pilots to make the operation work. Nonetheless, PSA pilots are not immune from many of the same issues and challenges that affect their industry peers.

PSA is one of two wholly owned subsidiaries of the US Airways Group as well as one of more than half a dozen airlines that provide service as US Airways Express.

Today's scenario for PSA pilots is as challenging and complex as ever and illustrates why a proactive membership is so important—especially now as their contract becomes amendable in June.

During 2006, management approached the pilots to fly, in exchange for a frozen pay rate, a predetermined number of 90-seat airliners (in addition to the current fleet of 50- and 70-seat Canadair jets they were operating). The pilot leaders declined to make any concessions, noting that the airline was no

longer in bankruptcy and that the pilots would not trade wages and quality of life merely for additional aircraft. The positioning of this new equipment, the Master Executive Council reasoned, should be based on corporate marketing and a customer-needs assessment, and not on what management's labor attorneys could haggle from the airline's employees.

Presently, the pilots of PSA and its fellow subsidiary—Piedmont—are working closely together toward a collective bargaining agreement to tackle pilot flow between the wholly owned carriers and US Airways mainline and on other issues of joint interest.

In addition to these continuing concerns, the pilots' MEC chairman, Capt. Mark Stanley, recognizes other ongoing challenges that, in many respects, mirror the circumstances at comparable airlines throughout the industry.

"The PSA pilots are committed to working together with pilots from the other US Airways Group airlines to keep from being pitted against each other," he says. "Many contentious issues have the potential to divide us as members of a single airline family, and we must communicate and strive to reach some level of consensus to overcome these if we have any hope of controlling our collective destiny. Cooperation among these pilot groups will be the key; without it, we will fail."

PSA management continues to place too much emphasis on beating down costs in the wrong places. Stanley says, "Our company is weathering these challenging economic times better than many other airlines, but often at the expense of employee morale and excessive furloughs. Inadequate staffing has brought about routine contract abuse among our schedulers.

"Management needs to look for constructive ways to engage our workforce so that pilots and other employees feel like more than just a company expense. We need to replace one-sided, management-imposed policies with true teamwork—more than just the standard management lip service about working together—and productive, consensual side letters and agreements, if we are to improve employee productivity and the general well-being of our airline," says Stanley.

Stanley and the rest of the MEC remain hopeful that PSA management will see the light as they approach the negotiating table this spring. 🌟

## Ryan

### Ryan International: New Contract, New Challenges

**By Rusty Ayers,** ALPA Senior  
Communications Specialist



**Ryan International is primarily a  
passenger charter airline.**

### RYN at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 118 active, 149 on  
furlough

**Fleet:** 2 B-757 ETOPS, 2  
B-767-300 non-ETOPS, 1 MD-82, and  
1 B-727-200

**Pilot Domicile:** Washington, D.C.  
(Dulles)

**Services:** With headquarters in  
Rockford, Ill., Ryan International  
(not to be confused with Irish low-  
cost carrier RyanAir) provides sched-  
uled and charter services for  
customers around the world, in-  
cluding substantial flying for the  
U.S. government

The pilots of Illinois-based Ryan International Airlines are trying to solve a mystery these days: why an airline that should be profitable is struggling to survive. Less than a year after ratifying a new collective bargaining agreement with its pilots, the airline is faced with continuing operational problems and Ryan pilots are losing confidence in the company's management team.

On March 7, 2008, the Ryan pilots ratified a tentative agreement by a 93 percent margin after 3 years of negotiations. The 4-year agreement gave pilots an average 40 percent pay increase throughout the life of the contract, in addition to significant improvements in nearly every section, including retirement, scheduling, vacations, training, and benefits.

Unfortunately, almost immediately after the contract took effect, management began violating it, pilots say. One example: the new CBA required management to provide ALPA's Scheduling Committee with access to the CrewTrac computerized scheduling system so that the committee can work with Crew Scheduling to improve efficiency. However, it took 8 months and the threat of arbitration to force management to finally give the union meaningful access. Other areas of the contract that are routinely violated include scheduling, expenses, filling of vacancies, and deadheading.

The airline was wholly owned by founder Ronald Ryan until 2004, when it was purchased by Rockford, Ill., real estate company Rubloff Development Corporation. "That's when things started going downhill," says the pilots' Master Executive Council chairman, Capt. Erik Sparks.

"Since the acquisition, management has been increasingly dysfunctional, and during the last year, we've endured more operational problems than we did during the previous 13," Sparks declares. "Our pilots have witnessed the deterioration of the performance, support, and leadership of our headquarters staff."

When former Navy Vice-Admiral Michael McCabe took over as president of the airline in October 2005, management's primary focus seems to have been on slashing costs, to the point that it is now jeopardizing operations, says Sparks. "Management went on a furloughing frenzy in an attempt to reduce payroll costs in the short term. The result is that we are now significantly understaffed, so much so that management is having trouble adequately crewing our worldwide operations.

"All of this desperate cost-cutting is hard to understand, because we should have a predictable stream of revenue from our ongoing government contracts. We know the money is going somewhere; but since we're a privately held company, it's difficult to determine how much money the airline is taking in, and where it is going," he points out. The Ryan MEC sent a letter to the managing partners at Rubloff, expressing its deep concern over the state of the airline and its future and requesting a meeting to discuss Ryan's ongoing problems. At press time, the owners of the airline have still not responded.

"We continue to believe that with true leadership, and a cooperative effort between a responsible management and the employees, Ryan International can restore its once-stellar reputation in our segment of the industry," Sparks says. "As we work to bring about that goal, we're urging our pilots to continue to set the example by conducting themselves with the same professionalism they have always displayed. Time is running out, and Ryan faces tremendous challenges. The current management employees have demonstrated that they are either unwilling or incapable of leading us out of the morass they have driven us into; it is time for a change in leadership and direction."

Ryan was created as a cargo carrier in 1981, expanding into passenger charter operations in 1984. One of its primary customers was the U.S. Postal Service, and it flew mail under a subcontract with Emery Worldwide for more than a decade. Ryan now provides aircraft and flight crews under contract to the U.S. Departments of Defense, Justice, and Homeland Security, and has operated civilian charters for Apple Vacations, Funjet Vacations, TransGlobal Vacations, TravelSpan, Ghana International Airlines, and Aero Sur Airlines. 🌐

## Spirit

### Spirit Pilots Remain Unified During Arduous Negotiations

**By Jen Lofquist**  
ALPA Communications Specialist

**On Labor Day 2008, Spirit pilots walked the line at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport to protest contract violations.**

Today's challenges for the Spirit Airlines pilot group are many—an unreasonable management, fruitless negotiations, and a business model that counts every penny and depends on basement-level labor costs. In spite of these difficulties, Spirit pilots remain unified and committed to their union. Increased communications and activities have strengthened the group from within and reenergized the Master Executive Council and Negotiating Committee.

"Spirit pilots are working harder than ever to meet the demands of this airline during this tough economic time," says Capt. Sean Creed, chairman of the Spirit pilots' MEC. "We value our profession, our contract, and our airline dearly—and will do everything in our power to protect them."

Negotiations for the pilots' next contract began in the summer of 2006 and have remained tense and fruitless. Despite the best efforts of the pilots, management has refused to bargain in good faith or abide by the contract. On Aug. 1, 2008, Spirit Airlines furloughed 45 pilots. Just a month later, an additional 70 pilots were furloughed. Even with a reduced pilot group, the airline did not make a commensurate reduction in flights. This self-inflicted pilot shortage resulted in flight delays and cancellations. Management took the position that any pilot calling in sick would be investigated and made the baseless accusation that the pilots were staging a "sick-in."

In September 2008, management hit a new low by requiring furloughed pilots to fly and be available to fly after their furlough date. This prompted the pilots to stage an informational picket on Labor Day at Fort Lauderdale-Hollywood Airport—one of Spirit's main hubs. A month later, the pilots picketed again, this time outside Detroit Metropolitan Wayne County Airport. Both events were well-attended and widely covered in the local news media.

Negotiations are still going on, with meetings planned for the next few months.



However, the pilot group has little faith that these talks will be productive. Frustration and anger are building, even as 25 of their own return to work.

In 1990, a small charter airline based in Detroit, Charter One, began offering scheduled service to Atlantic City. Two years later, the airline was renamed Spirit Airlines and quickly expanded, especially into the southern United States. In 1996, Spirit pilots elected ALPA as their collective bargaining agent.

In the years since, Spirit has relocated from Michigan to Miramar, Fla. The airline has also expanded more into the international arena—approximately half of its flights are to the Caribbean and Latin America. The expansion has strained the airline at times as it has positioned itself to serve a younger market and to be an "ultra-low-cost" airline.

Growing from the 86 pilots who voted in ALPA, 500-plus Spirit pilots fly more than 200 daily flights to 43 destinations. Spirit's fleet of Airbus A319s and A321s is one of the youngest in the airline industry.

In 2003, the pilots agreed to a contract that provided minimal improvements in work rules and compensation, but also allowed management to continue to grow the airline aggressively.

In return for more continuous days off—a boon for a pilot group with a high percentage of commuters—the pilots agreed to well-below-average pay. In fact, Spirit pilots remain among the lowest paid pilots who fly similar airplanes. 🌐

## SPA at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 560  
**Headquarters:** Miramar, Fla.  
**Fleet:** 27 A319s, 2 A321s  
**Pilot Domiciles:** Atlantic City, N.J.; Detroit, Mich.; and Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.



Winters in Minnesota are long, cold, and harsh, and residents of the state have found various strategies to survive. Many Minnesotans journey to their annual winter getaway using the hometown vacation provider, Sun Country Airlines.

Like many smaller vacation-themed carriers, Sun Country was created to serve the package charter market. With the demise of Braniff Airways in 1982, former Braniff crewmembers were looking for work, and a group of pilots and flight attendants approached Twin Cities travel company MLT Vacations about operating leisure flights for them. Sun Country Airlines was born.

“Most of our pilots have been with the company for more than 12 years. The majority of us live in Minnesota and after outlasting five different owners, we all have a strong investment in our airline,” says Capt. Buddy Scroggins, the Sun Country pilots’ Master Executive Council chairman.

Sun Country grew steadily through the ‘80s and ‘90s, flying vacation charters to Las Vegas, Florida, Mexico, and other warm-weather destinations. In the mid-’90s it was bought by another travel company, Mark Travel Group, and the pilot group joined ALPA in 1995. Sun Country initiated scheduled service in 1999, but the overextended airline was one of the first to declare bankruptcy after 9/11 and went into bankruptcy liquidation in early 2002.

A group of local Twin Cities businessmen who had helped found the airline in 1982 then bought the airline’s assets from the secured creditors and the airline resumed flying. ALPA was active in that bankruptcy case and was instrumental in ensuring that the new owners honored the ALPA/Sun Country pilot agreement. As a result, the pilots were recalled in seniority order to work at the new airline.

In 2006, the airline was sold to an individual who looms large with Sun Country today: Tom Petters, one of Minnesota’s best-known local entrepreneurs, who had a reputation for investing in promising companies including Sun Country, Polaroid, and Fingerhut Corp.

So it was a complete surprise to both Petters’ employees and the Twin Cities business community when federal agents raided his corporate offices in October 2008. Subsequent indictments have charged Petters with running the equivalent of a \$1 billion Ponzi scheme, using the “assets” of nonexistent companies he had created as collateral to obtain money from investors. Sun Country, however, was operated separately and doesn’t seem to be affected by the alleged criminal activity of Petters. Finding itself in a short-term cash crunch, Sun Country has now filed for bankruptcy and is withholding 30 percent of employees’ wages, with a promise to repay the money with interest in 2009. At the same time, CEO Stan Gadek, the former CFO of AirTran, is diversifying the types of flying the company is doing and maximizing the revenue opportunities.

“We’re encouraged that Stan is trying to make us less vulnerable to the vagaries of the marketplace and turn Sun Country into more of a four-season operation by strengthening our military and civilian charter business,” states Scroggins.

So as Sun Country struggles through the current blizzard of bad economic news, the pilots prefer to stay focused on sunnier weather ahead, just like the hardy Northerners who are its most faithful customers. Just last month, the bankruptcy court approved a loan from an affiliated company as DIP financing, allowing the airline to enter its high winter travel season with the operating capital it needs.

“In spite of it all, we remain hopeful because we’re a good airline and the only true hometown airline Minnesota has left,” Scroggins says. “With enough financing we believe our management will put us on a path not just to survive, but to succeed.”

## Sun Country

### Sun Country Plows on Through a Blizzard of Bad News

**By Rusty Ayers**

ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



Known primarily as a vacation getaway airline, Sun Country is expanding its charter business and recently flew the campaign plane for Vice-President-Elect Joe Biden. Shown is F/O Trevor Michael with one of Sun Country’s B-737s.

### SCA at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 163 pilots, including 37 on furlough

**Fleet:** 9 B-737-800s with additional B-737-800s leased during the winter flying season

**Services:** Based in Mendota Heights, Minn., Sun Country flies to 34 destinations throughout the Caribbean, the United States, and Mexico. Of these destinations, 14 cities are served year-round. Known primarily as a vacation getaway airline, Sun Country is expanding its charter business and recently flew the campaign plane for Vice-President-Elect Joe Biden

**T**rans States Airlines pilots have undergone some radical upheavals during the last 4 years—five union volunteers were targeted and wrongfully terminated (all now overturned by ALPA's aggressive and successful legal action), management created an alter-ego carrier in an effort to circumvent the TSA pilot group's collective bargaining agreement, and pilots left the airline in droves. During the past year, 78 pilots have been furloughed, 41 additional furloughs have been announced, and TSA will no longer operate as American Connections after May 2009. In spite of the turmoil, Trans States pilots have survived, and their unity and resolve is flourishing.

The Trans States Master Executive Council and key union volunteers (TSA's Coordinating Team) worked with ALPA staff to develop a strategic plan designed to support ongoing negotiations, which began in February 2006. TSA's Strategic Planning Committee worked closely with ALPA's Strategic Preparedness and Strike Committee to focus the pilots' efforts on two main strategic goals: to attain an industry-standard contract with increased job security and to increase solidarity and unity among the pilots.

Driven by the pilots' MEC chairman, Capt. Jason Ruszin, who was elected in 2006, the Trans States pilots have become a more unified and informed pilot group. Ninety percent of the pilots who responded to a recent Wilson Center poll indicated the TSA MEC is diligent in its communications efforts, and the vast majority are committed to a strike if the National Mediation Board declares an impasse and releases both sides into self-help.

The Trans States Coordinating Team has launched initiatives defined in the strategic plan—including a "Volunteer without Fear" campaign designed to encourage more TSA pilots to volunteer for union work, without the fear of losing their jobs.

While equal pay for equal work is a top contract goal, job security and scope protections are also on that list and are expected to be contentious sections of the contract. TSA pilots learned a hard lesson when Trans States Holdings, the parent company of Trans States Airlines, abandoned any pretense of loyalty to its employees by creating an alter-ego airline called GoJet, which became a direct threat to the job security of TSA pilots.

Despite Trans States' continued profitability as the fifth largest privately held regional airline in the United States, management continues to seek concessions during mediated negotiations. Trans States pilots and management have been negotiating for a new contract since February 2006. Despite nearly 3 years of negotiations, both sides remain far apart on key contract issues. TSA pilots are paid 7 to 23 percent below industry-average wages for pilots at airlines of comparable size and service. They also pay higher health insurance premiums and receive a meager 1 percent company match to their 401(k) plan, perhaps the lowest in the airline industry.

Repeated attempts by pilot negotiators to move these negotiations toward a mutually beneficial conclusion have been thwarted by management, demonstrating its unwillingness to bargain seriously to conclude the contract.

Aided by a \$2 million grant from ALPA's Major Contingency Fund, the Trans States pilots improved their communications channels by launching a negotiations newsletter. They staged several family awareness events and recently conducted informational picketing at Lambert-St. Louis International and Washington Dulles International airports. The MEC has also encouraged officer dinners during layovers and crewroom visits and uses all-pilot conference calls to answer questions from line pilots. A strike planning office was recently opened in St. Louis to facilitate pilot tracking, coordinate SPC activities, and provide logistic support for family outreach activities.

Through solidarity and strategic planning, Trans States pilots have laid the groundwork and now are ready and waiting for a contract that recognizes the need to reward their dedication and professionalism, and supports the airline's growth. 🌐

## Trans States

### Trans States Pilots Persevere in Contentious Environment

**By Kimberly Seitz**  
ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**Trans States pilots conducted informational picketing at Lambert-St. Louis International (above) and Washington Dulles International airports.**

### TSA at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 486  
**Operations:** More than 300 daily flights to 46 cities serving more than three million passengers annually flying as American Connection, United Express, and US Airways Express  
**Pilot Domiciles:** St. Louis, Mo.; Richmond, Va.; and Washington Dulles  
**Headquarters:** St. Louis, Mo.  
**Equipment:** 43 EMB-145s

## United

### United Pilots: Our Future Is Upon Us

By **C. David Kelly**

ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**UAL pilots at AFL-CIO debate at Soldier Field Stadium, Chicago, Ill.**

### UAL at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 7,800

**Headquarters:** Chicago, Ill.

**Fleet:** A319s, A320s, B-737s, B-757s, B-767s, B-777s, B-747s

**Pilot Domiciles:** Washington Dulles, Chicago, Seattle, Denver, San Francisco, New York JFK, Los Angeles

**S**ept. 11, 2001. Bankruptcy. A CEO and management apparently incapable of running a profitable, well-managed airline. A preliminary injunction. United Airlines' recent history has produced an emotional roller coaster ride for its pilots, a ride where there appears to be only a downhill slope.

A preliminary injunction issued against ALPA and four individual United pilots by Federal District Court Judge Joan Lefkow on November 18 is the latest blow to be inflicted on this pilot group. United Airlines claimed in court that ALPA and the four named pilots caused economic harm to the airline during the summer of 2008 by orchestrating an alleged sick-out and work slowdown. While the United pilots' Master Executive Council disagrees with the assertions management made before the judge, it is taking every reasonable step to make sure the pilots of United Airlines fully comply with the injunction.

"This court decision is a disappointment and a setback, but not a defeat in our ultimate battle to win a superior contract," said the pilot group's MEC chairman, Capt. Steve Wallach, following the court's decision. "It is now time to focus our energies on successfully executing our strategy for Section 6 negotiations."

The pilots of United Airlines have indeed reached a crossroads, one where looking backward no longer is an option. United pilots, says Wallach, will not wallow in the misery the recent past has wrought. Instead, they will turn their attention to April 2009, when ALPA and United management will begin negotiations for a new contract. These negotiations promise to be contentious and challenging. They also will, at last, lay to rest the dark days of the past 7 years and usher in a new beginning for United pilots and their families.

"Sept. 11, 2001, was a national disaster, but it also inflicted unspeakable pain on all pilots on this property, bringing about the loss of two of our crews and four of our brothers," says Wallach. "And bankruptcy brought us the most horrendous contract any major airline has ever seen. However, this is the contract we have, and this is the contract we must live under until we are legally entitled to change it. Does this mean we should resign ourselves and hang our heads in defeat? Absolutely not. We have the right to start negotiations for our new contract on April 5, and we intend to exercise that right, and to do it in the most unified way possible."

Wallach came into office on Jan. 1, 2008, with a mandate to unify the pilot group. A veteran of the landmark United strike of 1985, Wallach understands the need for, and benefits of, pilots working together to achieve the best collective bargaining agreement possible. He also sees in today's cockpits the same mettle and toughness that characterized the pilots in 1985. Wallach says pairing this determination and grit with the recent election of Barack Obama as president of the U.S. gives this pilot group more than a fighting chance of achieving the fair and equitable contract it deserves.

"President Obama's appointments to the National Mediation Board will be key to realigning the NMB so that the Railway Labor Act works as it was intended," says Wallach. "Instead of the Board being told by the White House to prevent strikes at any cost, the NMB will be permitted to evaluate every negotiation and, when appropriate, permit the parties to engage in self-help, in our case preserving the right to strike. As the RLA intended, this creates appropriate uncertainty about what the NMB will do to motivate the parties to reach an agreement. That uncertainty, including the threat of a strike, and our determined, good-faith negotiations will be our strongest tools in winning a fair and equitable contract.

"The time for moving forward is finally upon us. The MEC, its leadership, and the pilots of United Airlines possess the discipline and professionalism necessary to navigate the course that has been laid down. Recognizing that we now operate under a court injunction, we will remain focused on the future and the matter at hand: working within the rules and regulations of the RLA, and obtaining an improved contract as soon as possible," Wallach adds. "Our time is upon us. And we intend to seize the opportunity for a better contract and a better future for all our pilots." 🌐



► **Bearskin:** Bearskin pilots continue to build on the positive relationship they established with management during negotiations for their fourth labour contract in the spring of 2006. The collective bargaining agreement included improvements to wages, pensions, and scheduling policies.

Pilots and management are currently working together to fine-tune holiday/vacation bidding to accommodate annual mandatory training. They are also implementing a Safety Management System, which promotes a companywide safety culture and encourages pilots to report safety concerns without fear of retribution.

The cooperative rapport the pilots have with management could be particularly important as the airline adjusts to reduced passenger yields attributed to the recession and difficulties in

maintaining experienced pilot staffing levels.

“When the time comes to negotiate our fifth agreement,” says Capt. Dan Parnham, the Bearskin pilots’ Master Executive Council chairman, “the Bearskin pilots will strive to reach a deal that benefits the pilot group as well as our airline’s business plan.” The pilots’ current collective bargaining agreement expires in December 2011.

The nature of Bearskin flying has changed since the airline sold its Northern Division to Wasaya 4 years ago. Today’s fleet is solely configured for passenger service and can accept limited amounts of cargo.

► **Calm Air:** Pilot morale is high, according to Local Council 205’s vice-chairman, Capt. Tim Perry. Calm Air pilots have an industry-leading contract that includes competitive salaries and reasonable working conditions.

The pilots and management have been diligent in cultivating a respectful relationship. “As ALPA representatives, we have always found management to be responsive to us and to the issues of our pilot group,” says Perry. “Each contract has been an improvement over the one before it. We try to remember the hard work and battles fought and won with ALPA at our backs over the years.”

However, as the company transitions to ATR aircraft, some pilots are concerned that fewer HS 748 pilots will be needed, possibly forcing some pilots to relocate from Thompson to Winnipeg. The HS 748s have high maintenance and operating costs and are the first type being retired and replaced by the newer ATRs. All of the ATR pilots are based in Winnipeg, Man., and most of the HS 748 pilots are based to the north in Thompson, Man.

Calm Air will not be negotiating another contract until 2011. The coming years show a lot of promise for the airline, according to Perry. The north is being explored for natural resources at an unprecedented rate. Mines have been opening within the region served by Calm Air, and more are planned for the future.

“Both of these factors directly benefit Calm Air. I think our pilots, who have specialized skills for operating in the harsh northern climate, will expect to be fairly compensated as the company’s profits increase,” says Perry.

Calm Air flies scheduled passenger and cargo service in the Manitoba and Nunavut region of Canada, including destinations along the western shores of Hudson Bay and into the high Arctic. The flying in Nunavut, Canada’s largest territory, is challenging. The weather is extreme, erratic, and sometimes difficult to predict, especially during the long winter season.

Most of Calm Air’s airports have one short gravel runway that is often served by just an NDB for IFR approaches. With the exception of a few barges that can deliver fuel and non-perishables during the short summer when Hudson Bay is free of ice, absolutely everything is flown in.

► **First Air:** The Canadian pilots who fly for First Air have seen a great deal of change in the past year. In June 2008, the First Air Pilots Association (FAPA) formally merged with ALPA, becoming the seventh Canadian pilot group to join the union.

“Joining ALPA was the right move for us because we had outgrown our original structure and wanted the resources and support ALPA could provide,” says

## Canadian Combis

**Four in number are the Canadian airlines whose pilots are represented by ALPA and fly passengers, all-cargo, and combi flights into the small communities that sparsely pepper the Canadian north. Flying in the last North American frontier, these pilots are the lifeline connecting the bush with outside.**

### BRS at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 61

**Operations:** Daily scheduled passenger service between Flin Flon, Man.; Kitchener Waterloo, Ont.; Ottawa, Ont.; and Winnipeg, Man.; and cities in between

**Fleet:** 13 Metroliners

**Bases:** Winnipeg, Man., and Sioux Lookout and Thunder Bay, Ont.

**Headquarters:** Thunder Bay

### CMA at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 90

**Operations:** Scheduled passenger and cargo service in northern Manitoba and Nunavut, the newest and largest territory in northern Canada, including destinations along the western shores of Hudson Bay and into the high Arctic

**Fleet:** 6 Saab 340s, 4 Hawker Siddeley HS 748s, 2 Cessna Caravans, and 2 ATR 42s

**Pilot Bases:** Thompson and Winnipeg, Man.

**Headquarters:** Thompson, Man.

## FAB at a Glance

**Number of Crewmembers:** 146 (132 pilots and 14 flight engineers) with 2 on furlough

**Headquarters:** Kanata, Ont.

**Pilot Bases:** Edmonton, Alb., and Ottawa, Ont.

**Fleet:** 6 B-737-200 (four in combi configuration for cargo), 2 B-727-200 (1 combi, 1 freighter), 2 L382G Hercules freighters, 8 ATR 42-300 (all combi), 1 HS 748 (combi)

## WSG at a Glance

**Number of Pilots:** 85

**Headquarters:** Thunder Bay, Ont.

**Fleet:** 5 HS 748s, 4 Beechcraft 1900Ds, 4 Cessna 208B Caravans, and 13 Pilatus PC-12s

**Pilot Domiciles:** Red Lake, Ont., Thunder Bay, Ont.

Capt. Jamie Biggs, the First Air Master Executive Council chairman. “We believe we’re well positioned to grow and prosper as our airline grows, and we hope we can continue to build rapport with our new management so that our 2010 negotiations can be a win-win for everyone.”

In August, First Air and its parent corporation, Makivik Corporation, abruptly fired the airline’s long-time president and CEO Bob Davis, a polarizing figure who had butted heads with the union for more than a decade.

“It’s fair to say our relationship with Mr. Davis had been difficult,” says Biggs. “There were ongoing disagreements both with representation and bargaining throughout his tenure, and we’re hopeful we’ll have an easier time when we begin negotiations again next year.”

The pilots are 2 years into a 4-year contract ratified in 2006 that improved wages and made it easier for crewmembers to move to different aircraft types.

The 146 pilots and flight engineers of First Air operate a diverse fleet to some of the most difficult locations on Earth. First Air lives up to its slogan of “The Airline of the North,” flying B-737s, B-727s, ATR 42s, L382 Hercules freighters, and a single HS 748 to 29 communities across the Canadian arctic and northern Quebec. It was also the first commercial airline to serve the Antarctic continent and continues to provide seasonal air support in Antarctica to a variety of clients.

The airline flies to more destinations north of the Arctic Circle than below it, and much of the flying is done on gravel airstrips in severe weather. Since many of the communities First Air serves are reachable only by air, the airline flies almost anything that can fit in the airplane: mail, food, snowmobiles, sled dogs, scientific instruments, and equipment of all kinds.

The airline was founded as Bradley Air Services Limited in 1946, but is now owned by Makivik Corporation, a corporate entity created on behalf of the native Inuit people to receive and invest compensation funds from the Canadian government. First Air serves Makivik’s primary center of Kuujuaq in northern Quebec and other native populations in the high Arctic.

“The old contract basically kept people tied to one particular fleet because management put up huge roadblocks designed to deter people from bidding from one airplane to another. If someone did bid, they would be pushed back to first-year pay and then potentially furloughed if there was a downturn,” explains Biggs. “Winning the ability to transfer across fleet types was a big victory for us.”

► **Wasaya:** The pilots of Wasaya make up one of the newest groups to join ALPA. Last summer, the pilots began preliminary negotiations with their management under the leadership of their interim Master Executive Council chairman, Capt. Jeff Braun. Negotiations for a first agreement have moved slowly, but support for the union remains strong, and the pilot group is committed to negotiating a fair and equitable contract.

In late 2007, the pilots contacted a Canadian representative of ALPA and expressed an interest in joining the Association. In November, an organizing team visited the pilots and toured their bases. Pilot turnout at these meetings was very high, and support for ALPA was overwhelming. ALPA was certified as the pilots’ collective bargaining agent in January 2008.

Currently, the pilots fly Beech 1900Ds, Cessna 208B Caravans, HS 748 Hawkers, and Pilatus PC-12/46s. The Hawkers are used only for cargo, while the others carry only passengers or a combination of passengers and cargo. The Beech 1900s carry 18 passengers at most, while the Cessna and Pilatus singles seat 9.

Wasaya, based in Thunder Bay, Ont., has hubs in Sioux Lookout, Red Lake, Pickle Lake, and Timmons. The pilots fly passengers and cargo to 25 First Nation communities—many of which are only accessible via air. With roads scarce, most winter travel in the region is by snowmobiles, flown in on Wasaya airplanes. These communities of 500-4,000 people depend on Wasaya to provide most, if not all, of their necessities, including fuel, food, and medicine. Much of the Wasaya pilots’ flying involves temperatures well below freezing and isolated short gravel runways. 🌐

► **ASTAR Air Cargo:** The last year was a roller coaster ride for ASTAR flightcrew members. In February 2008, they ratified a new collective bargaining agreement, their third labor contract. The pilots negotiated retroactive pay and more than 20 percent in wage increases during the 4-year agreement. They also obtained furlough protections and a commitment from management to add new airplanes to the fleet.

However in May, DHL announced an agreement with UPS, one of its chief competitors, to outsource all of its North American air cargo operations—just 3 months after ALPA and ASTAR agreed to a new contract with job security commitments from ASTAR that DHL backed and approved. ASTAR pilots responded

quickly to the news and struck back with informational pickets, an advertising campaign in the U.S. and Germany, and requests to Congress to fully investigate the DHL-UPS agreement.

In September, Congress responded: both the U.S. House of Representatives Judiciary Committee and the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee held hearings on the DHL-UPS deal.

Since the deal was announced, DHL's North American market share has shrunk, with a significant number of customers migrating to other providers. This dramatic change has lowered the estimated value of the DHL-UPS agreement to 10 percent of what it was originally. If the two companies fail to come to an agreement, ALPA may have an opportunity to negotiate retention of the DHL flying by ASTAR.

ASTAR crewmembers move roughly half of the cargo tons flown nightly by DHL's North American operations. ASTAR serves civilian and military customers in 53 cities in the United States, Europe, and the Middle East with a fleet of 44 airplanes. Formerly known as DHL Airways, ASTAR has been DHL's primary airline for North America for 30 years.

► **Atlas Air:** Atlas crewmembers are currently working on joint contract negotiations with Polar Air Cargo and management. The two cargo carriers were merged in late 2004, and the National Mediation Board recently decided to treat both airlines as a single carrier for representational purposes. A Joint Negotiating Committee, with ALPA members from both carriers, continues to press for contract terms that reflect the crewmembers' contributions to the productivity and success of their airline.

Atlas Air is the world's largest provider of aircraft, crew, maintenance, and insurance (ACMI) freighters for lease service. The airline's large fleet of all-cargo B-747-200 and -400 freighters serves major airlines and freight forwarders around the globe. Atlas customers include Air New Zealand, British Airways, Emirates, Korean Air, Lufthansa, and Qantas. Atlas also provides scheduled and charter service as well as flights in support of the U.S. Air Force's Air Mobility Command.

An Atlas charter includes not only aircraft, crew, maintenance, and insurance, but also all landing/traffic permits, fuel, air waybill, aircraft handling, and Atlas' on-demand customer service center. (See Polar/Atlas sidebar, page 45.)

► **Capital Cargo International Airlines:** Capital Cargo crewmembers are currently in Section 6 negotiations and, despite an aggressive meeting schedule, progress has been slow. The pilots' Master Executive Council chairman, Capt. CJ Johnson, says, "Our biggest fight lies ahead of us. It's not going to get easier."

Capital Cargo, an aircraft, crew, maintenance, and insurance (ACMI) carrier, provides both domestic and international cargo flights and has two primary customers: Bax Global, which Schenker acquired in July 2006, serves 15 U.S. and three Mexican destinations from its hub in Toledo, Ohio; and DHL Latin America provides service from Miami, Fla., to Latin America.

Air Transport Service Group, Inc. (ATSG), has two principal operating businesses: Cargo Holdings, which has four operating subsidiaries—including

## Uniquely Cargo

**'Twas only last August when Air Line Pilot devoted an issue to the unique aspects of those ALPA pilot groups whose members fly all-cargo operations, their special safety and security concerns, and their unusual flying and exotic cargoes. Because we so recently highlighted this colorful and indispensable segment of the airline industry and the ALPA members who make it work, we've kept the all-cargo ALPA groups together again in this issue. Their mini-profiles are updated with an added focus on their contract status, goals, and related activities.**

### DHL at a Glance

Number of Flightcrew Members: 517  
 Headquarters: Miami, Fla.  
 Pilot Bases: Cincinnati, Ohio  
 Fleet: 6 A300B4 Freighters, 29 B-727-200Fs, 8 DC-8-73Fs, and 1 Bell 206 L-1

### AAI at a Glance

Number of Flightcrew Members: 578  
 Headquarters: Purchase, NY  
 Pilot Bases: New York's JFK  
 Fleet: 10 B-747-200Fs and 8 B-747-400Fs



## CCI at a Glance

### Number of Flightcrew

Members: 129

Headquarters: Orlando, Fla.

Pilot Bases: Home-based

Fleet: 14 B-727-200Fs and 2 B-757-200PCFs

## EIA at a Glance

Number of Crewmembers: 250

Headquarters: McMinnville, Ore.

Pilot Base: McMinnville, Ore.

Fleet: 11 B-747-100/-200s

## FDX at a Glance

### Number of Flightcrew

Members: 4,659

Headquarters: Memphis, Tenn.

Pilot Bases: Anchorage, Alaska; Hong Kong; China; Los Angeles, Calif.; Memphis, Tenn.

Fleet: 68 A300-600s, 66 A310-200/300s, 85 B-727-200s, 4 DC-10-10s, 10 DC-10-30s, 58 MD-10-10s, 10 MD-10-30s, 58 MD-11s, and 16 B-757-200s

## KFC at a Glance

### Number of Flightcrew

Members: 120

Headquarters: Kelowna, B.C.

Pilot Bases: Hamilton, Ont., and Vancouver, B.C.

Fleet: 1 B-727-100F, 2 B-727-200s, 12 B-727-200Fs, 6 Convair CV-580s, 1 Convair CV5800, 1 IAI Astra, and 2 DC-10-30Fs

## PAC at a Glance

### Number of Flightcrew

Members: 264

Headquarters: Purchase, N.Y.

Pilot Base: Chicago, Ill.

Fleet: 6 B-747-400Fs

Capital Cargo. The second ATSG business is ABX Air, an air cargo services provider operating out of Wilmington, Ohio.

► **Evergreen:** Evergreen flightcrew members have been pressing management for a new contract for 4 years. The National Mediation Board assigned a federal mediator in February 2006, though mediated talks have produced only minimal progress. The last round of NMB mediation was the first week in November 2008, and management put forward the same proposal it had made in the previous NMB session at the beginning of the year.

Evergreen crewmembers, who joined ALPA in November 2007 after earlier representation by the Teamsters and their own independent association, have not had a new contract since 1999.

Frustrated by the lack of progress at the bargaining table, the Evergreen Master Executive Council met with leaders from ALPA's Strategic Preparedness and Strike Committee and Communications Department staff in the summer of 2008. The MEC established a Coordinating Team and strategized on SPC activities the crewmembers could undertake. Since then, the pilots have conducted informational picketing at JFK and run mobile billboards in Miami, Fla., and McMinnville, Ore.—Evergreen's corporate headquarters.

Most of the airline's present operations support the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan via the Air Mobility Command Civil Reserve Air Fleet operations. In September 2008, Evergreen won a lucrative new route flying from New York JFK to Shanghai 6 days a week, beginning in March 2009.

The airline also provides aircraft, crew, maintenance, and insurance (ACMI) contracts worldwide. Evergreen has operated numerous other contracts for private forwarders located in Kenya, Israel, Norway, and South America.

The airline operates 11 B-747-100/-200 airplanes and is the sole operator of the new Boeing Large Cargo Freighter (LCF), a modified B-747 designed to carry B-787 Dreamliner component pieces for final assembly.

► **FedEx Express:** While the FedEx Express pilots' contract has just a little less than 2 years until its amendable date, the FedEx Master Executive Council is already preparing for the next round of collective bargaining. Negotiations for B-777 wage rates and other issues continue to take place while a pilot contract/scheduling survey is being prepared, which will help the MEC's Negotiating Committee prepare openers for Contract 2010.

The MEC and key committees continue to hold strategic planning sessions to determine the best course of action to support negotiations. While the recent reduction in the price of crude oil and jet fuel has paid benefits to the corporation, it remains to be seen how the global economic downturn will affect FedEx's bottom line.

FedEx has an extensive and varied fleet and delivers to 220 countries and territories, including every address in the United States.

► **Kelowna Flightcraft:** In November 2008, the Kelowna pilots' Master Executive Council Negotiating Committee reached a historically successful tentative agreement with Kelowna management. Fourteen months in the making, the TA, if ratified by the Kelowna pilots, will be in place from November 2009 until 2014.

The TA includes a complete rewrite from cover to cover, wage increases over the term of the contract (protected by increases pegged to the consumer price index), and language on staffing formulas requiring additional pilot hiring when overtime levels are reached or are projected to reach certain levels.

The Kelowna MEC approved the TA in late November and sent it to the pilots to vote on, with a unanimous recommendation to accept the agreement. The Negotiating Committee began cross-Canada roadshows at pilot bases on November 30 to present the document to pilots for their ratification. Member voting on the TA began December 10 and will end January 12.

First Officer Tim Wynn-Williams, the pilots' MEC chairman, said, "I am very pleased with the results of our hard work. Thanks to all the support and guidance from ALPA, we were able to work through all the issues and concerns we needed to address. I look forward to a cooperative and beneficial relationship with Kelowna management."

# ALPA/Schwab Enter Financial Services Relationship

**By Capt. Scott Stratton**  
(FedEx Express), ALPA R&I  
Committee Chairman

## One of the responsibilities

of ALPA's R&I Committee is to provide members with a preferred financial services provider if they are in need of sound independent advice during their careers. This membership service has been provided the past 2 years by Fidelity, with varying degrees of success. However, after working together with the Association's R&I staff, the Committee has decided to offer pilots greater flexibility while still providing quality financial investment service. As a result and after careful research and due diligence, the union has enlisted Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. as its new preferred financial services provider.

Whether you are scheduling a formal consultation or just want to learn about the various ways Schwab can help you with your investments, a complimentary personal phone consultation with a financial consultant is your first step. Call Schwab's dedicated ALPA team at 1-888-600-8905 today to get started.

Take advantage of this unique opportunity available to you as an ALPA member. Schwab can help you reach your financial goals by providing

- Personalized service—You can have access to a specific financial consultant who listens and makes suggestions based on your unique needs.
- Fact-based guidance—Whether you want help managing your portfolio or someone at Schwab to manage it for you, you'll receive investment guidance and portfolio planning that's right for you.
- Member value—Schwab offers a wide range of products, with low, easy-to-understand prices, attractive money-market and interest-bearing checking accounts, and professional service.
- Convenient access—Visit a local Schwab branch office, or access your account information 24/7 by telephone or on the Internet at schwab.com.

## Personal attention and special discounts

ALPA members in good standing, including furloughed and retired mem-

bers, can receive special benefits from Schwab including low pricing on equity commissions and discounts on select financial planning and advice services. You'll have access to a dedicated Schwab financial consultant and experts in tax, trust and estate planning, retirement and financial planning, insurance, equity compensation planning, structured products, and more.

Having a current Schwab account does not preclude you from taking advantage of this special offer. However, you will need to call Schwab's dedicated ALPA team and register as an ALPA member to access these additional discounts and services. If you choose, you can even continue to work with your current Schwab investment professional.

When it comes to your retirement and investing needs, ALPA's R&I Committee strives to provide you with the best services and benefits possible—that's why the Association is excited about its new relationship with Charles Schwab and the help and advice the company can offer you during these turbulent financial times. 🌐

## Polar/Atlas

As this issue goes to press, an election for representation rights to the combined pilot group is pending following filing of authorization cards by the Teamsters. This unfortunate by-product of the merger, Polar strike, and pilot disunity is not unexpected. The IBT has historically tried to take advantage of internal disputes. During turbulent times, Teamsters officials suddenly appear seeking to separate crewmembers from their ALPA colleagues in the rest of the industry and join them instead with hard-working men and women who drive trucks or work in warehouses, bakeries, laundries, breweries, dairies, and cafeterias. Unfortunately, pilots are less than 1 percent of the Teamster membership and have little influence compared to these other members when it comes to the direction of that union, allocation of resources, and dedication of staff. In the end, the IBT has shown it can't deliver the services needed by pilots. The decertification of the IBT at UPS, ATA, Evergreen, and, most recently, NetJets shows that Teamster promises give way to a harsh reality soon after the election.

The Kelowna crewmembers carry more than 600,000 pounds of freight across Canada nightly; the airline has an exclusive contract with the largest courier service in Canada—Purolator Courier—and a contract with Canada Post. Kelowna pilots also fly a limited number of charter flights from Canada to Florida, the Caribbean, and Cuba.

► **Polar Air Cargo Worldwide, Inc.:** The Polar and Atlas crewmembers were recently acknowledged as a single bargaining unit by the National Mediation Board for representational purposes, and continue their efforts with a single Joint Negotiating Committee to bargain for a new collective bargaining agreement.

The Master Executive Council officers note, "The most important current issue for both Polar and Atlas crews is long-past-due improvements in their compensation and quality of life, and ALPA has pledged the full resources necessary to achieve them in the shortest possible timeframe."

The current agreement became amendable March 31, 2007, and was the product of a brief work stoppage by the pilots in late 2005.

Polar specializes in international time-definite, airport-to-airport scheduled B-747 freight service between major cargo markets in the Americas, Asia, Europe, and the Far East. (See Polar/Atlas sidebar, left.) 🌐