

JAZZ PILOTS RATIFY TA

Unity and Perseverance Help Jazz Pilots Achieve Their Goals

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



In July 9, after almost 2 years of planning and coordination between the Jazz Master Executive Council and the Negotiating Committee, the pilots ratified a new collective bargaining agreement. Of the eligible pilots, 90 percent voted. Of those, 86 percent voted in favor of ratifying the agreement, which has an expiry date of June 30, 2015.

"Jazz pilots have spoken with a unified voice, and we expect management to deal responsibly and expeditiously with the implementation of the new agreement," said Capt. Brian Shury, the pilots' MEC chairman.

Jazz negotiators sought and achieved a contract that reflects improvements in critical areas. "I applaud all Jazz pilots for giving the Negotiating Committee the support and power to do what we needed to do at the bargaining table," said Capt. Paul Peace, the pilots' Negotiating Committee chairman. "With their help, we were able to make enormous gains in the contract, including major improvements in pension, benefits expenses, per diem, and pay rates."

"We essentially rewrote all 28 sections of our agreement to reflect our new reality as [pilots of] a large, growing, and diverse airline—at the same time providing enough flexibility for the airline to grow and meet the contract expectations of our very diverse, experienced, and talented pilot group," said Shury.

Details of the new agreement were presented to the Jazz pilots in five separate road shows across Canada, including Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto, Montreal, and Halifax.

The pilots' Negotiating Committee undertook more than 13 months of intense discussions at the bargaining table while having the backing of Pilot to Pilot® volunteers, who executed an effective communications campaign under the direction of the Jazz Strategic Preparedness and Strike Committee (SPSC). "It is the first time that our MEC used the full resources of the Jazz SPSC, and we were impressed with the results," said Shury. "The support of our pilot volunteers, the pilots and their families, and the resources of ALPA were critical components in reaching our contract goals in this round of bargaining."

Jazz pilots received a \$5 million Major Contingency Fund grant in May 2009 that provided the resources to set up an effective SPSC from which their P2P initiatives evolved to create a support network at all five Jazz pilot bases across Canada.

The pilots were working under a collective bargaining agreement that had an expiry date of June 30, 2009. They were seeking what they called a "career contract" that would provide stability and recognize their contributions of more than a decade to the success of the airline.

The new agreement reflects the hard work and enduring solidarity of the Jazz pilot group. During 2000–2001,



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the merger of four regional airlines—AirBC, Air Nova, Air Ontario, and Canadian Regional—resulted in the formation of Air Canada Regional. The consolidation process was completed in 2002, and the airline became Air Canada Jazz. The pilots' solidarity continues to play an important role in their success. "We learned during the restructuring process of 2003–2004 that working together as a unified group puts us in the strongest possible position to achieve the outcome we all seek—a viable, profitable, and sustainable airline that recognizes the pilots' contributions," Shury said.

Reaching the agreement, however, was made more difficult when the federal government inserted itself in the negotiations, raising the threat of back-to-work legislation in the event of a lawful strike. "In the face of a government that effectively tried to limit our ability to bargain freely, we regained control of the process and demonstrated our commitment to a free collective bargaining process and achieving a fair agreement for our members," noted Shury. 🌀