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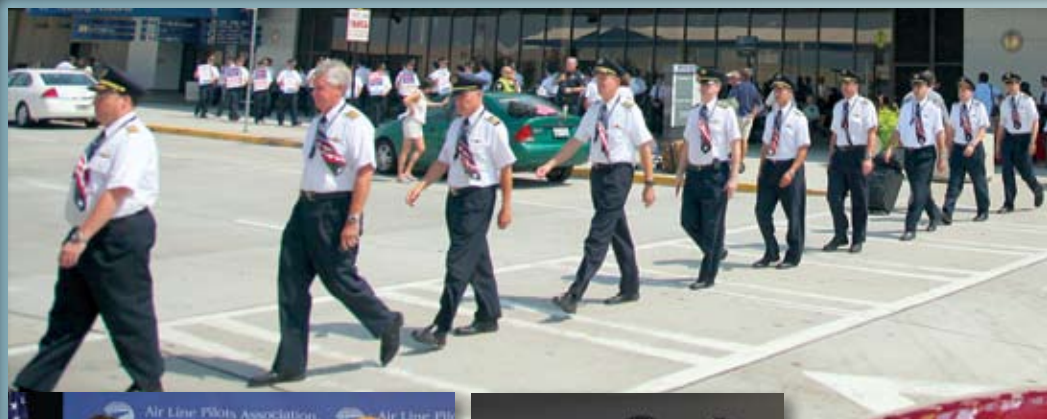
The Pilots Of ALPA



Profiles of All 37 ALPA Pilot Groups

As aluminum is mixed with several other metals and heat-tempered to make the strong, durable alloys used to build the airplanes we fly, so too are the 53,250 members of ALPA's 37 pilot groups alloyed into one Association, the world's largest union of airline pilots. And just as the melding of disparate elements and the heat of the crucible produce a stronger, more durable metal with which to craft our wings, the heat of many battles, large and small, has forged our amalgamation of many pilot groups into a stronger, more durable union. ■ Common purpose unites all ALPA members—our desire to live up to the Association's longstanding motto, Schedule with Safety, while working within a "just safety culture," flying schedules that provide for adequate rest, and being fairly compensated with wages and benefits that reflect our productivity and contributions to our airlines. ■ Please turn the page to learn more about the shared and unique characteristics of your fellow pilots' airlines, their operating environment, and their challenges and successes. ➤





Air Canada Jazz

Jazz Pilots Look To Achieve Industry-Leading Contract In 2010

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



A Jazz CRJ.

ACJ at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1997

Number of Pilots: Approximately 1,550

Operations: 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 CRJ100/200/705s

The Jazz Master Executive Council leaders had a busy year in 2009. They recognized early on the strategic importance of ensuring that the pilots stay focused on their collective goals: diversifying their company's business, reducing dependency on the Air Canada Capacity Purchase Agreement (CPA), and ensuring that Jazz pilots have all the tools necessary to meet the requirements of modern airline operations.

For 2010, the pilots' strategic goals are nonetheless challenging, including negotiating an industry-leading collective bargaining agreement that balances compensation with lifestyle. "At the end of the day, if you don't have a profitable, growing, sustainable company, the collective bargaining piece is irrelevant," says Capt. Brian Shury, the MEC chairman. "Our focus has to be on finding a way to diversify the revenue base at Jazz."

To reach its goal, the Jazz MEC has brought together a negotiating committee whose members have an exceptional depth of knowledge and experience. "We believe there is absolutely no reason we cannot have an industry-leading contract that compensates our pilots fairly and at the same time serves as a foundation and catalyst to ensure that the company grows and is profitable," says

Shury. "None of these things happen because you wish they would or hope they would; we make our own luck." Negotiating Committee members are continuing to overhaul the pilots' contract through ongoing negotiating sessions with management.

The Association is standing firmly behind the Jazz pilots. In keeping with ALPA's history of supporting pilot groups when faced with management challenges, Jazz pilots received a \$5 million Major Contingency Fund grant from ALPA's Executive Board in 2009 to help them achieve a new contract.

Both the Jazz MEC and Strategic Preparedness Committee (SPC) have worked tirelessly to build a communica-

tions plan that effectively connects each of Jazz's five pilot bases and will evolve over the long haul so that the process extends beyond current negotiating activities. The communications plan takes into account the geographic challenges that many Jazz pilots experience because they are widely dispersed across Canada, from Victoria, British Columbia, to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Jazz SPC spent much of 2009 implementing a variety of resources in the ALPA toolbox, including a Pilot-to-Pilot® program with representatives from each Jazz base. "The complete support of the pilot group is imperative," says Capt. Barry Turner, chairman of the SPC. "Our campaign slogan is 'Strength In Unity.' Unity is the key to any successful undertaking. If you act alone, work against each other, or chose not to act at all, you cannot effect change or hope to challenge the status quo."

The pilots' communications strategy includes an ambitious coast-to-coast Family Awareness program that has proved highly successful, drawing hundreds of Jazz pilots and family members from across Canada. "One of the biggest challenges we face is to educate the newer pilots on the enormous value of belonging to ALPA," says Shury. "We believe that with the support of the pilots, their families, and the resources of ALPA, we will reach our goal of a contract that balances compensation and lifestyle in such a way that Jazz remains a career choice for our pilots."

"Jazz pilots have a common cause, and they can and will pull together toward their goal," Shury adds. The pilots continue to embrace the idea of unity, a concept they have tested in practice over the past year. "Our unity has given us the energy to develop and pursue objectives that are in the absolute best interest of our members," says Turner, "and that are ultimately in the best interest of our employer."

Jazz is the second largest airline in Canada based on fleet size and the only airline serving all 10 provinces and two territories. Jazz pilots fly 800-plus daily flights to 85 scheduled destinations in Canada and the United States. The company also has an operation dedicated to charters using both Dash 8s and CRJs. 🌐

AirTran

New Year's Resolution: New Contract

By **Toni C. Vacinek**, ALPA Communications Specialist



AirTran pilots have been negotiating for a new contract since 2004. Several picketing events, including this one in Atlanta, and other SPSC events were held during the summer and fall in an effort to move the process forward.

ATN at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2009
Number of Pilots: 1,600+
Pilot Domicile: Atlanta, Ga.
Headquarters: Orlando, Fla.
Operations/Services: Founded in 1992, AirTran Airways is one of America's largest low-cost airlines and offers quality jet service with more than 700 daily flights to 69 destinations. AirTran Airways is the second largest carrier at the world's busiest airport, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, and has major operations in Baltimore, Md.; Milwaukee, Wisc.; and Orlando, Fla.
Fleet: 86 B-717s, 52 B-737s

For the pilots of AirTran Airways, May 1, 2009, was the start of a new year and a new beginning. In the same manner that one would shout "Happy New Year" each January 1, the pilots of AirTran Airways resoundingly exclaimed, "We Are ALPA" on May 1, 2009. Formerly represented by an independent union, the National Pilots Association (NPA), the 1,631 pilots of AirTran Airways have joined together as brothers and sisters in the Air Line Pilots Association while continuing the fight for better work rules, fair wages, and most importantly, quality of life.

After contract negotiations lasting 4 years, and negotiations seemingly at a halt, merger discussions between ALPA and the NPA began in January 2009. A merger agreement was sent out for ratification in March 2009, and on April 10, 2009, the vote closed, with more than 87 percent of the pilots who cast ballots voting in favor of ratifying the proposed merger agreement between ALPA and the NPA. The determination of the AirTran pilots to negotiate a fair contract and improved working conditions led to the campaign to join ALPA. That same determination will result in a new contract in 2010.

"The 88 percent vote in favor of the merger is almost as impressive as the fact that 94 percent of the pilots voted," said Capt. John Prater, ALPA's president, while addressing ALPA's Executive Council and welcoming the then NPA Board of Directors. "It speaks volumes about your members and their commitment to a brighter future."

Awarded a \$5 million grant from ALPA's Major Contingency Fund for strategic planning and strike preparedness, AirTran pilots ramped up their efforts and conducted five informational picketing events in less than one year. On August 6, they conducted informational picketing to commemorate 5 years of contract negotiations on a contract that became amendable in May 2005.

Additional ALPA resources have allowed AirTran union leaders to significantly diminish an immense backlog of grievances that has accumulated over the

years—one of the key reasons, along with collective bargaining resources, that the pilots sought alternate union representation. They have been able to secure an increased number of negotiating dates and have enhanced communications among the group while working toward a new collective bargaining agreement.

Informed Pilot-to-Pilot® volunteers maintain a steady stream of communication on the line, while updates on negotiations and strategic preparedness are disseminated through a range of communication vehicles, including newsletters and electronic updates. Although negotiations are progressing, management continues to instigate unnecessary setbacks by targeting individual pilots.

In a Thanksgiving message to the pilots, F/O Linden Hillman, the Master Executive Council chairman, said, "We should be thankful that AirTran is strong, and hope that our corporate officers will finally recognize that they should fight for their company and not against their employees." He added, "We should also be thankful that our hard work has helped make AirTran the successful enterprise it has become."

The pilots' Negotiating Committee, with guidance from the MEC, continues to work on garnering an industry-standard contract equal to that of those flying similar-sized aircraft at other major airlines. Not only has AirTran management set up obstacles along the way, it has tried to limit the pilots' support of their union. Yet, AirTran pilots have united and proved to management that they can transcend any obstacles, including layoffs, displacements, firings, suspensions, and threatened discipline for displaying the ALPA logo on their person while in uniform.

Despite the dismal economy, AirTran remained profitable in 2009, making some of the highest quarterly profits in the company's history, and the airline is expected to be even more successful in 2010.

In late 2006, Barack Obama said, "We have to acknowledge the progress we made, but understand that we still have a long way to go. That things are better, but still not good enough." That could easily describe AirTran under ALPA. Things are better and improving every day. 🌐

Air Transat

Air Transat Pilots Gear Up for Negotiations and Safer Regulations

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



An Air Transat Airbus A310-300 lands at London Heathrow Airport, England.

For the Air Transat pilots, contract negotiations are the main focus in 2010 as the pilot group bargains for a new contract. "We hope to see the pilots continue as a unified group and remain in a good position to execute a respectful and productive negotiations process," says Capt. Sylvain Aubin, the pilots' Master Executive Council chairman. The pilots are committed to working through whatever challenges they may encounter with management.

One of these challenges is outsourcing. Air Transat's parent company, Transat A.T., has in the past outsourced some of the group's flying. However, in 2009 management significantly increased outsourcing to a level that is unsatisfactory to the pilot group. The pilots are now faced with a situation that could potentially jeopardize pilot seniority positions, which is why the MEC has filed a grievance against this outsourcing.

"We certainly recognize that we are in a competitive market and that our holding company, Transat A.T., needs some operational flexibility, but we are against it when it becomes a threat to our pilots' careers," says Aubin. Air Transat operates approximately 13,000 flights per year from gateways across Canada. Outsourcing the group's flying is emerging as one of the main issues the MEC will address going into its 2010 negotiations for the pilots' fourth contract since Air Transat joined ALPA in 1999. "And to add insult to injury, some of this outsourced flying is being flown by foreign pilots, which has been made possible through Labour Canada's Foreign Worker Program," adds Aubin.

As Air Transat is largely an international charter operator, the pilot group anticipates many more challenges ahead; Open Skies agreements, carbon taxes, and fleet renewals are among the most pressing. "Since we are in the middle of an international market, we must look forward and be ready to work with our management as partners," states Aubin, "but this partnership cannot and will not materialize if management continues to outsource our flying."

"Our past experience within the ALPA

family leaves us optimistic that negotiations will move along smoothly because of the resources and support available to our MEC," he adds.

The collective bargaining agreement that 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.


Using ALPA's experience and lessons learned as a participant in the recent FAA Aviation Rulemaking Committee, the pilots are working with other Canadian pilot groups to bring about much-needed change to current flight- and duty-time rules that push the limits of on-the-job exhaustion.

Capt. Martin Gauthier, chairman of the ALPA Flight Time/Duty Time Committee for Canada, believes the time is right for Canada to amend its flight- and duty-time regulations. "We have some of the weakest and most liberal rules among the ICAO states and it is time for our government to take its responsibility seriously and establish regulations based upon scientific principles and knowledge," declares Gauthier.

"We need a level playing field for everybody, and the Canadian aviation regulations need to fix that. We are also committed to entering into discussion with our management to establish a fatigue risk management system on our property in 2010."

Air Transat specializes in both scheduled and chartered flights from several Canadian cities to global vacation destinations. The airline has a fleet of Airbus A330s and A310s. The pilots transport some 3 million passengers annually to nearly 60 destinations in 25 countries including Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland, and the U.K.

Air Transat has added several new routes, 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 A310-300s, bringing the number of widebody jets in its fleet to 18. 

TSC at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1999
Number of Pilots: 312
Headquarters: Pierre E. Trudeau International Airport, Montreal, P.Q.
Pilot Bases: Montreal, P.Q.; Toronto, Ont.; and Vancouver, B.C.
Fleet: 18 A330s and A310s


Air Transport International's pilots are one of the newest groups to join ALPA. On Nov. 4, 2009, in a National Mediation Board election, ATI crewmembers chose ALPA as their collective bargaining representative. The International Brotherhood of Teamsters had represented the ATI crew-

Association's staff and resources can help the group achieve its goals.

"ATI crewmembers are extremely pleased with 'ALPA's Toolbox.' We did not have the resources under the IBT that we have now with ALPA, and we plan to take full advantage of this opportunity," says Rogers.

Before joining the Association, the ATI Negotiating Committee had made some progress at the bargaining table. However, because the group was in mediated negotiations for more than 4 years under the IBT, new relationships needed to be established to resume negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement. To that end, the ATI MEC negotiating team, along with ALPA's president, Capt. John Prater, attended a dinner with ATI management in Little Rock, Ark., on December 8. The ALPA negotiating team then met the following day with ATI management to set an aggressive negotiating schedule beginning immediately after the New Year. However, because management was unwilling to devote any time to contract negotiations in January, negotiations have been delayed until February.

"Although management didn't provide us with the necessary commitment to resume negotiations right away, we will have time to prepare using the ALPA resources available to us and get back on track," Rogers states. "We remain focused on the prize of negotiating a contract that our crewmembers deserve and will continue in this fight until the end."

As one of ALPA's newest pilot groups, ATI crewmembers have hit the ground running. Although time spent at the negotiating table has been long and arduous, ATI crewmembers now have the backing of the largest pilot union in the world. This is just the beginning of their journey with ALPA. 

Air Transport International

ATI Crewmembers Hit the Ground Running

By Tawnya Burket, ALPA Communications Specialist

members for more than a decade.

"The crewmembers were ready for the change to ALPA, and it showed with an overwhelming 99 percent of our eligible members voting for ALPA representation. Our goal has always been to negotiate a fair contract with our company; and now, with the strength of ALPA on our side, we really feel that goal is within our reach," says Capt. Tom Rogers, the ATI Master Executive Council chairman.

ATI crewmembers have been working under an amendable contract since May

2004. They were presented with two "final" tentative agreements from management since then and voted both down. The current union leaders were voted into office

and a new Negotiating Committee was formed. After more than a year of negotiations, the MEC distributed a strike ballot, and 100 percent of the crewmembers endorsed a strike, if necessary. The crewmembers backed this new direction, led by Rogers, and the vision to join ALPA.

ATI MEC leaders met on November 17-18 at ALPA's offices in Herndon, Va., to gain further awareness of their new union's resources. The MEC officers and Negotiating Committee chairman began to establish relationships and gain more knowledge about ALPA and how the



An Air Transport International DC-8 landing at Thule Air Base, Greenland.

ATI at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2009

Number of Crewmembers: 170

Operations: DC-8 and B-767 passenger, military, and cargo operations around the world

Base: Home-based

Hub Cities: Toledo, Ohio, and Miami, Fla.

Headquarters: Little Rock, Ark.

Air Wisconsin pilot leaders spent most of 2009 building on the solid foundation they laid in 2008, a foundation designed to enhance communications and to further strengthen their committee infrastructure. Both initiatives have been highly successful, and the number of active volunteers has

in 2001. When United Airlines put ARW's United Express flying out for re-bidding in 2003, the pilots and management negotiated and ratified a restructuring letter of agreement intended to retain the United flying. Despite the pilots' concessions, including extending their contract to 2011, United ultimately rejected the feeder contract with Air Wisconsin. Shortly thereafter, Air Wisconsin invested in US Airways during its bankruptcy and began operating as Airways Express in 2005. Since becoming a US Airways Express carrier, the airline's financial performance has remained strong, which is positive news for those looking to the next contract negotiation cycle.

In preparation for determining Contract 2011 goals and objectives, the MEC and Negotiating Committee sought feedback and input from the pilots through an on-line survey. MEC leaders and negotiators met with ALPA staff in Charlotte, N.C., in mid-December to develop a strategic plan for the upcoming negotiations and to decide how to address several current challenges, such as Air Wisconsin's recent decision to implement a FOQA program without ALPA as a participant. As goals and objectives become more clearly defined, pilot leaders will continue to effectively communicate and inform their members of the progress. This information sharing is a deliberate effort of the MEC's revitalized communications plan.

"Communications—the Cornerstone of Solidarity" is the slogan that the MEC Communications Committee adopted for the inaugural campaign launched in late 2008. The campaign is designed to disseminate quality information and generate meaningful dialogue among the pilots and ARW union leaders. "Our communications team takes great care to ensure that every publication reaches the line with a clear message and carries the voice of the union," says Capt. Joe Ellis, the ARW MEC chairman.

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, 20 pilots are furloughed, although the airline tentatively plans to call back all of the furloughed pilots in early 2010 when it begins hiring. 🌀

Air Wisconsin

Negotiating Coalition Seeks To Strengthen Pilots' Role at Negotiating Table in 2010

By Kimberly Seitz, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

more than tripled. The capstone of the Master Executive Council's activities this past year was participating in the newly opened Section 6 negotiations at fellow US Airways feeders Piedmont and PSA.

While Air Wisconsin pilots' current contract does not become amendable until October 2011, pilot negotiators are already knee deep in the process as participants in negotiations with the PDT and PSA pilots and their management teams. "We are blazing uncharted paths

through our coordination, and these efforts will lead to stronger and more robust agreements in the future at PSA, PDT and ARW," says F/O Mark Lockwood, the pilots' MEC Negotiating Committee chairman. The new Negotiating Committee members are gaining valuable negotiating experience that will serve their pilots well when they sit down at the table to bargain with management.

Pilot negotiators from ARW will continue to sit at the table with PDT and PSA pilot negotiators as all three pilot groups work together to circumvent any attempts by management to pit the pilots against each other, a common alienating tactic used by the managements of regional airlines.

"We want our management teams to compete on how well they can run an airline," Lockwood says. "Our airlines appear to prefer the old system of competing based on how little they can pay their valued employees. That's got to stop."

While many observers view the ARW collective bargaining agreement as one of the best in the airline industry, ARW pilots don't need to be reminded about the sacrifices and concessions they have had to make since they signed a 4-year contract



Capt. Josh Manning at La Guardia Airport.

ARW at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1982 as a result of the Union of Professional Airmen merger with ALPA

Number of Pilots: 669

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 (LGA); Norfolk, Va.; Philadelphia, Pa.; Raleigh-Durham, N.C.; Washington, D.C. (DCA)

Fleet: 70 Canadair 50-seat regional jets

Alaska

New Focus, Perennial Priorities Await Alaska Pilots In 2010

By Jenn Sutton, ALPA Communications Specialist



Seattle-based F/O Ward Kellogg during a preflight.

ALA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1947

Number of Pilots: 1,455, including 106 currently furloughed

Operations: 421 daily departures to 60 destinations in the United States, Canada, and Mexico

Domiciles: Anchorage, Los Angeles, and Seattle

Fleet: 116 B-737-400/-700/-800/-900s

For Alaska Airlines' pilots, the 2010 landscape looks much different from recent years. Last May, after more than 2½ years in negotiations, the pilots overwhelmingly ratified a new contract—one that included double-digit pay increases, a choice of retirement plans, and revamped scheduling rules. For the first time in more than three decades, their contract was negotiated through traditional Section 6 negotiations, rather than under the looming specter of arbitration, or decided by an arbitrator if direct negotiations failed to produce an agreement.

But on a more somber note, January 1 marked the first time in more than 25 years that the pilot group began the New Year with fellow Alaska pilots on furlough. The first of the 106 furloughs occurred Jan. 6, 2009; the most recent occurred on October 2.

And while the hustle and bustle surrounding negotiations has dissipated, the Alaska Master Executive Council pilot volunteers are staying active and are focused on contract implementation and enforcement, safety, and continuing to represent the interests of all Alaska pilots, including those furloughed.

"For obvious reasons, over the past several years we were focused on negotiating a new contract. Now, we're putting a renewed emphasis on contract compliance and on resolving grievances," says Capt. Bill Shivers, the pilots' MEC chairman. "It's important that we protect the provisions we fought so hard to achieve so that we can continue making gains in our next set of negotiations."

The pilots' Grievance Committee already has begun work to resolve as many outstanding grievances as possible through meetings with management. At the same time, the MEC's Contract Compliance Team is beefing up its communications to the pilots. The pilots' new contract also created a Scheduling Management Group (SMG), which is comprised of both ALPA and management representatives. The SMG meets regularly to resolve scheduling problems and disputes as they arise.

While the majority of the new contractual provisions are already implemented, a few items, including real-time pilot-to-pilot trip trading, must be phased in. The new contract also moved the pilots to

the same performance-based pay profit-sharing plan as the rest of the airline's employees and management. The first opportunity for the pilots to receive their share of the performance-based pay will come this year.

"It appears that 2009 was a profitable year for Alaska Airlines," Shivers says. "Based on that, and the formula for our new profit-sharing plan, the pilots should be looking forward to a profit-sharing check greater than anything we've seen in more than 10 years. Our hope is that this year flying will pick up and we will see recalls. Barring that, we will continue to explore any new, workable ideas to bring our furloughed pilots back to the cockpit."

Also new this year will be training changes, per the new collective bargaining agreement, which provides opportunities for distance learning, allowing for part of the pilots' recurrent training to be performed remotely.

"One of the significant challenges we face is ensuring that our training quality is not diminished as a result of less time in the classroom as distance learning is implemented," says Capt. Bryan Burks, the MEC Training Committee chairman. "That's something that our Committee will focus on."

Contract implementation, enforcement, and training are just a few of the more visible areas of emphasis for the coming years. Working more behind the scenes is the MEC's Central Air Safety Committee, which has been focusing on key safety initiatives. "Our pilots are the true leaders in safety here at Alaska," says Capt. Pat Fitzpatrick, the MEC Central Air Safety Committee chairman. "We were frustrated with the pace of Safety Management System (SMS) development here at Alaska, so the Central Air Safety Committee has taken a leadership role in working to implement an ALPA-centric SMS at Alaska Airlines. Because SMS combines data from ASAPs, FOQA, and human factors analysis, it takes those discrete reports and provides a more comprehensive picture of a specific event. From that, we can create a database that allows us to analyze events on an organizational safety level. This analysis should yield safety recommendations that will be shared with the FAA and management."

American Eagle

Eagle Pilots Use Experience to Secure a Fair Contract and Improvements For the Piloting Profession

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



An American Eagle CRJ at DCA.

The American Eagle Master Executive Council has ambitious goals for 2010. Since 1997, Eagle pilots have worked under a long-term collective bargaining agreement that had three abbreviated contract amendment rounds built into the agreement. In 2009 and pursuant to the last of the amendment

rounds, Eagle and the pilots negotiated improvements to pay and work rules. In 2010, the Eagle MEC is beginning to prepare for full Section 6 negotiations, which will begin sometime before Jan. 1, 2013, and has already begun the process of providing information to pilots, only a third of whom were employed during the last Section 6 negotiations.

Despite having successfully completed the last of its three contractual amendment periods in 2009, many challenges remain. Among those is AMR management's recent decision to outsource some of Eagle's Chicago operations to another carrier. Processing this grievance will be a significant priority for the Eagle MEC in

parties to the case (ALPA, the Allied Pilots Association, American Eagle, and American) are unable to do so. This should be the final chapter in "Letter 3," which established an Eagle pilot's right to future employment at American in exchange for furlough protection for American pilots.

By mid-2010, some much-awaited movement in Eagle pilot ranks will be initiated by delivery of the first of an additional 22 CRJ700s. This has played a critical role in recalling the remaining furloughed American Eagle pilots. Additional aircraft and the movement of Eagle pilots to American will likely require Eagle to hire new pilots in 2010.

Also this year, the Eagle Training Department will begin developing its Advanced Qualification Program (AQP) and change from a traditional training philosophy to a more dynamic training approach, which is expected to enhance and improve the training experience for Eagle pilots. "Pilot volunteers will be very involved in this process, and we look forward to rolling up our sleeves to make it a success," says Capt Dave Ryter, the MEC vice-chairman.

Eagle pilots are also involved in their union and are taking on challenging issues. "Eagle pilots play an important role in the forefront of our profession," says Capt. Tony Gutierrez, the pilots' newly appointed MEC chairman. "We have pilots serving our union by holding national offices and key committee chair positions." Eagle pilots are contributing to and making a difference on issues such as the FAA Reauthorization Act and the Airline Safety and Pilot Training Improvement Act. "Our pilots will also be leading the way in working with educational institutions to develop pilot training programs that meet new FAA requirements," Gutierrez says, "and they continue to serve notably in air safety, critical incident response, and HIMS capacities."

Indeed, this pilot group has some of the U.S. airline industry's most senior and experienced pilots. "We are pleased that management has finally acknowledged that pilot experience is the single most valuable asset of its pilot workforce, and not a cost item on a balance sheet that should be targeted for cuts," Ryter says. ☺

EGL at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1996 (after the National Mediation Board election, the American Eagle—Executive, Flagship, Simmons, and Wings West—pilots voted to establish a single MEC)

Number of Pilots: 2,700+

Pilot Domiciles: Chicago, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Los Angeles, Miami, JFK, La Guardia, 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; sister company with American Airlines under the AMR Corporation

Headquarters: Ft. Worth, Tex.

Fleet: 210 airplanes, including Super ATRs, EMB-135/140/145s, and CRJ700s

2010 and will certainly affect the Eagle pilots' preparation for Section 6 negotiations in 2013.

One of the MEC's goals in 2010 is to complete the process of securing a fair transition for Eagle pilots who hold American Airlines seniority numbers. EGL pilots originally negotiated these rights in the 1997 flow-through agreement. When AMR improperly filled vacancies that belonged to EGL pilots, the pilots grieved management's actions and, in arbitration, won an award ordering retroactive application of the flow-through provisions to 244 EGL pilots who should have been sent to training at American Airlines as early as June 2007. Arbitrator George Nicolau retained jurisdiction to administer the remedy portion of the case if the four

ASTAR

ASTAR Pilots' Futures Still Up In the Air

By Jen Lofquist, ALPA Communications Specialist



PHOTO BY JEN LOFQUIST

ASTAR pilots listen as U.S. representatives debate anti-trust implications of the DHL-UPS deal.

The roller coaster ride that began in 2008 for ASTAR pilots continued in 2009 as they persevered in their fight for their jobs and the provisions of their contract. As the year came to a close, ASTAR pilots endured considerable disappointment but were able to claim some success and hope to see better days ahead.

The story begins with positive news in February 2008: ASTAR pilots ratified a new contract that included significant wage increases and furlough protection. But, just 3 months later, the unexpected happened. DHL—ASTAR's biggest client and a 49 percent owner—announced plans to give all of its North American cargo operations to UPS, one of its chief competitors.

To combat this unjust, shady maneuver, ASTAR pilots immediately launched into survival mode, initiating an aggressive campaign to stop the deal. The pilots exposed the agreement through numerous news media ads (including one in a prominent German newspaper), congressional hearings, and picketing events. The agreement not only threatened their jobs, but also the economy of Wilmington, Ohio, the home of DHL U.S. operations. Congressional leaders and political candidates gathered in opposition and openly questioned the legality of the proposed agreement. After months of public scrutiny, DHL's market share significantly declined and the estimated value of the original deal with UPS was reduced by 90 percent.

In November 2008, DHL announced that it would exit the U.S. domestic ground and express shipping market completely—leaving only the demands of DHL's international customers to utilize ASTAR's air fleet, as well as other carriers under contract to DHL. The UPS deal was effectively dead.

As 2009 began, the pilots refocused their efforts on preserving what they could from the 2008 contract. Integral to this contract was a no-furlough clause. The question remained: with the drastic reduction in flying, would ASTAR and DHL honor this provision?


In May, the pilots got their answer. Yes, ASTAR would agree to abide by the contract signed in 2008, as well as several other protections, in return for ALPA dropping a lawsuit against DHL

stemming from the UPS agreement. All ASTAR pilots hired before March 2008 were assured of their current pay status through March 2010, or 6 months past the furlough date, whichever is longer.

Capt. Pat Walsh, the ASTAR pilots' Master Executive Council chairman, said at the time, "Our goals were simple—stop the DHL/UPS agreement from being finalized, keep as many of our pilots working as long as possible, and obtain the best severance we could for any pilots who would lose their jobs. None of this would be achieved without our ALPA contract, our ALPA representation, and our active pilot group."

Unfortunately, DHL formally announced its plans to abandon its facilities in Wilmington, Ohio, and relocated to Cincinnati, where it owns a facility that the company left in 2005 to go to Wilmington. But many of ASTAR's airplanes didn't find a home in Cincinnati. The 29 B-727-200Fs are currently parked in the desert, as there simply isn't enough demand to support their use. The remaining ASTAR pilots are flying the eight DC-8-73Fs to fulfill the company's contract with DHL that extends through 2019. At present, 114 ASTAR pilots are flying—many only until the more senior pilots are trained on the DC-8s.

Sadly, December saw the first of many furloughs, as the 11 pilots who were hired after March 2008 were furloughed. The silver lining came in the form of fellow ALPA pilots. In November, Capt. Jay Pierce, the Continental pilots' MEC chairman, formally requested that Continental management extend preferential hiring to ASTAR, as well as Midwest, pilots. Continental management approved the request, and is scheduled to begin hiring in mid- to late-2010.

At present, ASTAR continues as a primary carrier for DHL. The contract with DHL continues for another decade and DHL still owns nearly half of ASTAR. Contrast this with the other cargo carriers that fly for DHL and do so without a contract and commitments from the company—small victories indeed. But these pilots are resilient and know that the future is far from certain. With the firm unity of the pilot group, help from ALPA, and the support of other ALPA-represented pilot groups, ASTAR pilots remain hopeful for better days ahead. 

DHL at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1991

Number of Pilots: 517

Headquarters: Miami, Fla.

Pilot Base: Cincinnati, Ohio

Fleet: 6 A300b4 freighters, 29 B-727-200Fs, 8 DC-8-73Fs, 1 Bell 206 L-1

The pilots of Atlantic Southeast are not unlike their peers at other fee-for-departure carriers. They suffer from fatigue; they battle contract enforcement issues on a daily basis, such as scheduling, reserve pilot usage, and staffing; and they are seeing their quality of life erode due to increased industry

demands. And they are not immune to the all-too-familiar furlough announcements.

Despite these ongoing challenges, the ASA Master Executive

Council is continuously striving to find solutions for its pilots. The group has been working closely with fellow Delta and Delta Connection pilot groups, believing strongly that their own success and career stability relies heavily on cooperation among the group.

"While we have made substantive improvements internally at ASA, we still have work to do," says Capt. Dave Nieuwenhuis, the MEC chairman. "The long-term stability and sustainability of the quality of our respective contracts depend on a close working relationship with our fellow family pilots." The groups meet regularly in joint standing committees and in fee-for-departure carriers' pilot strategy summits.

Adding to the MEC's laundry list of ways to improve the scheduling and quality of life of its pilots, pilot leaders have been reviewing a new preferential bidding system (PBS). Working with management, the two sides soon hope to reach a final agreement that produces an industry-leading PBS system. The two sides are also working to secure contract improvements in exchange for a contract amendable date extension to November 2011 with a May 2010 early opener. These improvements would include a 1 percent pay increase and increased vacation credits, among others. The MEC plans to conduct PBS road shows in January to inform the ASA pilots about the details of the proposed PBS before it goes before a pilot vote in early 2010.

On the contract front, ASA pilot leaders continue to successfully clarify or modify their current contract with 15 additional new memoranda of understanding during the past year, bringing

the total number to 55. The MEC is determined to build on past successes to secure further improvements in quality of life, compensation, and scheduling once Section 6 negotiations begin in May 2010.

The pilots also continue to lead the way in maintaining high standards for airline safety, and the MEC continues to build on the airline's solid reputation for safety and professionalism. This year, the MEC initiated a Flight Operations Quality Assurance program that will allow access to de-identified flight data and permit the company to analyze the data for trends to find new ways to improve flight safety and increase overall operational efficiency.

The MEC has also taken major strides in improving the way it communicates with its pilots. Working with ALPA's IT and Communication Departments, the MEC leaders are making good on a goal set this past year—developing a new MEC website and newsletter. The website is visually more appealing, easier to navigate, and provides the group with timely updates. Most notably, the ASA pilots were the first ALPA group to receive customized RSS feeds via their MEC website. Members can choose from a menu of information categories and receive summary updates as soon as new information is posted.

While the MEC was improving its internal communications, the pilots were also being recognized in the national news media spotlight. Atlantic Southeast crewmembers created aviation history on Feb. 12, 2009, by having the first all-female African American crew in U.S. history. Flight 5202, a Bombardier CRJ700, departed Atlanta, Ga., enroute to Nashville, Tenn., with Capt. Rachele Jones and F/O Stephanie Grant at the controls while flight attendants Diana Galloway and Robin Rogers took care of their passengers.

Skywest, the carrier's parent company, recently entered into a financial agreement that will assign flying to the ASA pilots under the United brand. Beginning in the first quarter of 2010, ASA pilots will fly 14 aircraft out of Washington Dulles for United Express. The aircraft assigned to the United flying were slated to be removed from the Delta system in the summer of 2010. 🌐

Atlantic Southeast

Pilots Build on Past Successes To Secure Future Contract Improvements

By David Fisher, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



At SkyWest shareholders' meeting, from left, are Capt. Rick Bernskoetter, Maury Gottlieb, Andrew Topp (kneeling), Nick Tomlin, Chris Mankmyer, Seth Heckard, and Steve Prescott.

ASA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1987
First ALPA Contract: Nov. 28, 1989
Number of Pilots: 1,689
Headquarters: Atlanta, Ga.
Pilot Base: Atlanta, Ga.
Airports Currently Served: 144 airports in 27 U.S. states, the Bahamas, and Canada
Passengers Carried in 2008: 12,559,722
Fleet: 112 CRJ200s, 38 CRJ700s, 10 CRJ900s

The nature of Bearskin flying has changed since the airline sold its Northern Division to Wasaya a few years ago, and though there are no announced plans to expand operations in 2010, the airline has established an indelible niche, offering daily scheduled passenger service throughout Ontario and Manitoba.

Bearskin

Pilots Raise the Bar on Contract Improvements For Canada's Turboprop Pilots

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

Bearskin's main pilot base is in Thunder Bay, Ont. (CYQT). There are two smaller pilot bases in Sioux Lookout, Ont. (CYXL) and Winnipeg, Man. (CYWG). "Bearskin has found its place in the commuter world and appears to be doing well," says Capt. Danny Parnham, the Bearskin pilots' Master Executive Council chairman.

Today, the "Bear" continues to offer more than 100 departures daily to 17 destinations in Ontario and

relationship," says Parnham.

Advancements to the current contract focused greatly on quality-of-life issues. "Contract No. 4 was also successful in negotiating advancements to Transport Canada's current flight-time/duty-time regulations," says Parnham. "When the time comes to negotiate our fifth contract, we will strive to reach a settlement that will benefit not only the pilot group, but also our airline's business plan."

In 2010 and beyond, the Bearskin MEC plans to take a lead role in pushing for improved flight-time/duty-time regulations for Canadian pilots. As an appointed member of ALPA's Flight Time/Duty Time Committee for Canada, Parnham says he is 110 percent committed to bringing science-based improvements to the current Canadian flight-time/duty-time regulations. "I will advocate to the best of my ability the concerns of 703 and 704 pilots in Canada," says Parnham.

For the Bearskin pilot group, as with many other Canadian and U.S. pilot groups, fatigue is a critical factor of daily operations.

Bearskin pilots fly as many as 12 legs per day in 704 aircraft without the assistance of autopilot.


"As exhausting as this is, many more carriers have no limit to cycles and routinely do more than 12 legs per duty day. Fatigue is an issue that doesn't affect just our personal lives but those of our families and the flying public as well. An accident should not be the catalyst for changing our country's flight-time/duty-time regulations," says Parnham. 



PHOTO BY BZUK

A Bearskin Metroliner.

Manitoba. No other airline offers more service between northern Ontario's key cities.

Thunder Bay and Sudbury combined feature more than 25 departures daily and act as Bearskin's major hubs, linking northern Ontario's five largest cities to Winnipeg, Ottawa, Ont., and a number of smaller communities.

The pilots fly routes as far south as Kitchener/Waterloo, Ont., to as far north as Flin Flon, Man. East/west operations extend from Ottawa to Winnipeg.

Bearskin's fourth contract was ratified 3 years ago, and to date no grievances have been filed. "Our contract is starting to reap the rewards of maturity and a positive labour-management

BRS at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1997 (became an ALPA-represented pilot group when CALPA merged with ALPA)

Number of Pilots: 61

Pilot Bases: Thunder Bay, Ont.; Winnipeg, Man.; Sioux Lookout, Ont.

Headquarters: Sioux Lookout, Ont.

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

Fleet: 14 Metroliners

For the pilots of Calm Air, who serve the remote regions of northern Manitoba and Nunavut, morale remains high despite a change of ownership in March 2009 that moved the airline from family-owned to a large corporation.

Though no changes have occurred

since the company's founder sold the operation to the Exchange Industrial Income Fund (EIIIF), Calm Air pilots are aware that anything can

happen. "There will inevitably be changes coming to Calm Air," says Capt. William Stock, MEC vice-chairman. "We need to be prepared for a new management-pilot relationship, and we plan to look to the experience of other pilot groups around North America, especially ALPA-represented pilots, to help us prepare for this new reality."

For now, however, Calm Air pilots are satisfied with their contract.


"We believe that we have a fair contract," says Capt. Tim Perry, vice-chairman of Council 205. "And we all agree that the successes are a direct result of our effective Master Executive Council leaders and the ALPA resources they have access to."

"We are very proud of our contract and believe that pilot groups across North America can benefit from what we have achieved here at Calm Air," says Stock. "Of course, there is always room for improvement, and we intend to press for those improvements when the time comes."

The pilots believe that working to improve standards across the airline industry is crucial. The MEC is committed to helping provide input on flight-time/duty-time legislation by giving its unique perspective on operating around the clock in one of the most extreme, remote regions in the world—the Canadian Arctic. "Our pilot group strongly believes that we make Calm Air successful because of our work ethic," says Capt. Rich Cenerini, the MEC secretary-treasurer. "Even though we operate in a harsh and unforgiving environment, our great safety record is second to none."

The pilots' contract becomes amendable in 2013; however, the MEC will not wait until then to start addressing the pilot group's priorities. "We want to encourage participation among our members and continue building on our very strong and open lines of communication," declares Perry. "We believe that the best way to lift the wages and working conditions in the airline industry is one pilot group at a time, one contract at a time."

The MEC hopes to build on significant gains from the past. "We remain focused on negotiating a fair contract for our pilots while keeping a watchful eye on the progress of our merger with EIIIF," says Stock. "Five years down the road, we want to be part way through an industry-leading contract. Calm Air is a profitable airline, and we take a lot of credit for making and keeping it that way. When the next contract comes along, we want to see some sizable wage gains as well as pension gains and improvements to vacation time." The MEC would also like to see Calm Air progress as an industry leader in the regional/commuter/freight industry regarding pay and working conditions.

The MEC has recently begun to see more pilot participation in ALPA-related events. It held two successful Family Awareness gatherings last summer in Thompson and Winnipeg. "More people are volunteering their time," says Cenerini. "Meeting attendance is up, and pilots are using the ALPA resources available to them to make their opinions and voices heard. There will always be pilots leaving Calm Air for the major airlines in Canada, but that so many have chosen to stay and dedicate themselves to careers here says a lot about what we have achieved." 

Calm Air

Pilots Serve Small Communities to Fill a Tall Order for Those in Need

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



PHOTO BY KEN MIST

A Calm Air Saab 340.

CMA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1997

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

Pilot Bases: Thompson and Winnipeg, Man.

Headquarters: Thompson, Man.

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

The CanJet pilot group continues to grow, operating an all-next-generation fleet of B-737-800s that increase fuel efficiency and range while reducing noise and carbon emissions. The 4-year collective bargaining agreement ratified in 2008 continues to support the growth and stability of the pilot group.

The company has purchased additional B-737-800s as part of its fleet renewal program. The -800s are configured to a 189-seat capacity and are equipped with a drop-down video system for passengers.

The CanJet pilot group made international headlines on April 19, 2009, during the attempted hijacking of Flight 918, which was crewed by Capt. James Murphy and First Officer Glenn Johnson. The heroic actions of the CanJet flight crew to thwart the effort were widely publicized and honored.

In a special ceremony at the prime minister's residence on June 15, the crew was praised for its outstanding professionalism and composure in response to the attempted hijacking that occurred at Sangster International Airport in Montego Bay, Jamaica.

During that luncheon, Canadian Prime

CJA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2006

Number of Pilots: 113


Operations: Provides subcontracting services to vacation charter airlines

Pilot Base: Halifax, N.S.

Headquarters: Halifax, N.S.

Fleet: 14 B-737-800s

Minister Stephen Harper acknowledged the crewmembers for their courageous conduct in gaining the safe release of every CanJet passenger on board the airplane and mitigating a potentially tragic situation. The crew received a standing ovation from Parliament. (See "Front Lines," August 2009, page 6.)

CanJet pilots became ALPA members in June 2006 and ratified their first collective bargaining agreement in June 2008. 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 management," says Tracey Hyndman, CanJet's Master Executive Council vice-chair. "It's a good start." 

CanJet

CanJet Pilots Are Hopeful About The New Year

By ALPA Staff



Capt. James Murphy, left, and F/O Glenn Johnson flank Capt. Prater during the awards ceremony at the ALPA Air Safety Forum last August. They were presented the Aviation Security Award for Valour for their heroic acts that thwarted an attempt to hijack CanJet Flight 918 on April 19, 2009.

With important ALPA resources at its disposal, the Capital Cargo Master Executive Council knows how to run an effective operation. From preparing for contract negotiations to using various ALPA communications tools to participating in the President's Committee for

Cargo (PCFC) meetings, the

Capital Cargo

CCI Crewmembers Ramp Up Negotiations for 2010

By Tawnya Burket, ALPA Communications Specialist

MEC is well-equipped to position its crewmembers for success.

Capital Cargo crewmembers have been in Section 6 negotiations for approximately 2 years and have scheduled future negotiating meetings with management through May 2010. The Negotiating Committee is entering the final phase of negotiations and preparing for economic discussions at the negotiating table. Before joining ALPA, the crewmembers voted down two sub-standard tentative agreements and have since been working under a contract that became amendable in 2004.

"Since we started negotiating with ALPA representation, management has given us much more time at the table, and we have made slow but steady progress on non-economic issues," says Capt. Andrew Forsythe, the CCI MEC chairman. "Twelve sections of our contract are tentatively agreed on, and we have an accelerated schedule for bargaining in 2010 with an optimistic outlook for negotiations to remain ongoing."

The MEC also spooled up a Pilot-to-Pilot® (P2P) Committee last year as a way to dispel rumors and keep members informed with accurate information. With the program in place, the MEC's message trickles down to the line pilots in a quick and effective manner.

"We have a great group of pilots who went through the ALPA P2P training to become ambassadors of the CCI MEC. It's good to see the P2P reps in the crew room wearing their red lanyards and communicating the message of the MEC," says Forsythe.

The CCI MEC participates regularly in PCFC meetings and, in conjunction with the PCFC, has developed the Toledo (Ohio) Users Group (TUG) initiative. Since its inception, TUG

has met twice, in September 2008 and April 2009. This Group's purpose is to make operations out of Toledo, Ohio, safe and efficient. The PCFC is currently planning a follow-up TUG meeting for the first quarter of 2010.

In early 2009, while TUG was still in its early stages, the Capital crewmembers got a taste of TUG success. One of the common concerns expressed among crewmembers was a lack of ramp markings delineating aircraft parking spots. Within days of the TUG meeting, the airport operators painted spot numbers and other markings, making it easier for everyone to determine individual parking locations.

Also running operations out of Toledo is Air Transport International (ATI), one of five subsidiaries under the corporate umbrella of Air Transport Service Group, Inc. (ATSG). The ATI pilots are one of ALPA's newest pilot groups. (See "Air Transport International," page 19). Capital Cargo's other sister companies are ABX Air, Airborne Maintenance and Engineering Services (AMES), Cargo Aircraft Management (CAM), and LGSTX Services.

"The CCI MEC crewmembers are very pleased to welcome our brothers and sisters at ATI into ALPA," says Forsythe. "We already share the same parent company and work for the same customer. It's about time we share the synergies of being part of the same union."

Capital Cargo is an aircraft, crew, maintenance, and insurance (ACMI) carrier that provides both domestic and international airport-to-airport transportation services. The airline has two primary customers—BAX Global and DHL Latin America. BAX Global was acquired by DB Schenker in July 2006 and provides freight transportation and supply chain management services, specializing in the heavy freight market for business-to-business shipping. Capital Cargo provides lift for BAX Global out of its Toledo hub with flights to 17 major domestic airports, Canada, and Mexico using B-727-200 freighter conversions. The pilots flying the B-757-200 PCFs provide service for DHL Latin America (based in Miami, Fla.) to various destinations in Latin America. 🌐



PHOTO BY JOHN PERKINSON

From top, CCI MEC Negotiating Committee vice-chairman F/O Chuck Lee, MEC Communications and SPC chairman F/O Chuck Hill, Representation Department Manager Jeffrey MacDonald, MEC Negotiating Committee chairman Capt. Brian Frassetto, and MEC vice-chairman Capt. Pete Bitzker discuss strategy with others during a Coordinating Team meeting at ALPA's Herndon, Va., offices on Nov. 6, 2009.

CCI at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2007
Number of Crewmembers: 130
Headquarters: Orlando, Fla.
Crewmember Bases: Home-based
Hub Cities: Toledo, Ohio, and Miami, Fla.
Fleet: 14 B-727-200s and two B-757-200 PCFs; all aircraft are freighter conversions

Colgan

Colgan Pilots: Unified in Voice, Vision, and Goals

By Barbara Gottshalk, ALPA
Lead Communications Specialist



Standing, from left, are F/O Louis Zimmermann, Capt. Jeffrey Leiendecker, Capt. Scott Gates, and Capt. Barry Nomann. Seated is F/O Carla Widman, who pulls double duty as the MEC vice-chair and the Membership Committee chair.

CJC at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2008

Number of Pilots: 450

Largest Pilot Bases: Houston, Tex.;
Newark, N.J.; Washington, D.C. (Dulles)

Headquarters: Memphis, Tenn.

Operations: Colgan Air operates
as Continental Connection, United
Express, and US Airways Express, offer-
ing daily scheduled service to 53 cities in
the United States and Canada

Fleet: 34 Saab 340s, 14 Bombardier
Dash 8-Q400s

One year after certifying ALPA as their bargaining representative, the pilots of Colgan Air act more like experienced ALPA veterans than like one of the Association's newest—and youngest—pilot groups. In that short time, their pilot group has come through the tragedy of the Colgan Air Flight 3407 crash unified in their voice, their vision for their group, and their goals for enhancing their airline *and* their careers at Colgan.

They attribute their strong solidarity in large part to their membership in ALPA. "From the beginning, our goal has been to build a cooperative partnership with our management that both furthers our airline's goals for growth and profitability and allows pilots to flourish in their careers at Colgan," says Capt. Mark Segaloff, the Master Executive Council chairman. "But without ALPA representation, we had no means to represent the interests of our pilots on an equal footing with management."

Soon after they joined ALPA, the Colgan pilots acted swiftly to remedy that. Segaloff and his fellow MEC officers and local council representatives set to work staffing and training their committees and launched a membership campaign that resulted in 97 percent of Colgan pilots joining ALPA by April 1, 2009. Since then, union representatives have met with management on a regular basis to lobby on behalf of their pilots regarding critical issues affecting them and to implement tangible, beneficial changes.

In the past few months, increased communication and coordination has taken place between the pilots and management. The positive results include two separate letters of agreement—one concerning maintenance cancellation pay, the other regarding the vacation policy—which took effect in January and several new policies on reduced guarantee lines, reserve call-out order, removal for operations experience, and duty day limits that the Scheduling Committee helped Crew Planning develop.

Additionally, the MEC officers presented management with recommendations for improving employee morale based on the overwhelming feedback they received from the pilots.

The Colgan pilots are encouraged that this positive tone is carrying over into

their contract talks. They began negotiating their first contract in September, and after four bargaining sessions with management, are on track to have opening proposals on all 30 or so contract sections presented within the next few months.

A key factor in the MEC Negotiating Committee's approach to bargaining with management is constant communications with the pilots—i.e., providing them with up-to-date information and actively seeking their feedback. The extensive preparations leading up to contract openers included soliciting input from Colgan pilots via an online survey, analyzing a number of other pilot contracts, and moving forward with their plan to build support for negotiations and to inform pilots about the process.

Two-way communications with the pilots is a big part of all the initiatives that the MEC and various committees have undertaken. "The feedback we get from our pilots arms us with the information we need to make headway in our discussions with management both at the table and in our other discussions," says F/O Carla Widman, who pulls double duty as the MEC vice-chair and the Membership Committee chair.

The Colgan ALPA leaders have implemented a robust communications plan that includes the MEC website, weekly e-mail updates, newsletters, systemwide conference calls, informal airport get-togethers, and an active Pilot-to-Pilot® program.

When they joined ALPA, the Colgan pilot leaders understood the benefit of regular communications and building solid relationships with their peers in the airline industry. They credit ALPA representation with enabling their pilots to interface more closely with pilots from other airlines, most importantly, their sister airline, Pinnacle, which is also owned by Pinnacle Airlines Corporation. "While we are two separate pilot groups and have differences, we are committed to finding common ground to tackle the issues that we both face," Segaloff says. "Through ALPA, our two pilot groups have established an open, on-going relationship in which we can work together and with our managements to improve our airlines." Spoken like a true ALPA veteran who has the unified support of his pilot group behind him. 🌐

Comair

Comair Pilots Stand Strong Against Further Concessions

By Jen Lofquist, ALPA Communications Specialist



Capt. Matt Lamparter, the pilots' MEC chairman, and Comair President John Bendoraitis sign the new ASAP agreement.

The countdown to 2010 may have just ended, but for Comair pilots a new clock has been set. This fall, Comair pilots will deliver their Section 6 notice to management and begin negotiating their new contract. Currently, these pilots are working under a bankruptcy contract negotiated in 2007 under the threat of bankruptcy-court-imposed conditions. They are hopeful this round of contract negotiations will be different.

In December 2009 the MEC selected a Negotiating Committee, which has already begun to work on its opening proposals for fall 2010. The contract amendable date is March 2011. Few expect negotiations to be quickly resolved as management has indicated it will seek further concessions from the pilots.

The Comair pilots, however, see things a bit differently. They have been sacrificing their own quality of life to help save the company since 2005—\$42.5 million in concessions to be exact—and they are looking to be fully recognized and rewarded for their contributions.

Since Comair's bankruptcy filing in 2005, the company has struggled financially as a result of the economic downturn and volatile fuel prices. As a result, 337 pilots were involuntarily or voluntarily furloughed as the airline tried to find its niche in the newly expanded Delta family—which now includes more regional airlines than ever.

In early 2009, management started moving more and more pilots to New York as Delta reduced Comair's flying in Cincinnati. This prompted many of the pilots to become commuters—adding long hours to their already tight schedules.

Regarding safety issues, the MEC unremittingly pushed for the reinstatement of the Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP), which had been discontinued in October 2008 after significant concerns were raised about how it was being administered. As a result of the successful efforts of the Comair


MEC, the Delta MEC, and other ALPA-represented pilot groups in the Delta family, a new industry-leading ASAP program was established and implemented at Comair.

The pilots, however, were hit with more bad news later that summer as their travel benefits were significantly changed by Delta management. Before June 23, Comair pilots were extended the same benefits as those enjoyed by mainline pilots. After the change, they found themselves well below mainline pilots in priority. This news was especially hard to accept as many of the pilots were forced to commute as a result of the downsizing of the Cincinnati domicile. With reduced travel priority, fewer jumpseats were available and many pilots were faced with the difficulty of simply getting to work.

In September, on top of travel struggles, an additional 80 furloughs were announced. Many pilots took voluntary furloughs or early-out options, which helped to mitigate the extent of the future furloughs.

In November, management learned that Delta was allocating additional flying to Comair and more pilots would be needed. In addition to offering to recall more than 40 pilots, the furloughs planned for January 2010 were cancelled. Although this is good news, more than 300 Comair pilot still remain on furlough.

"One of my main goals as MEC chairman," says Capt. Matt Lamparter, "is to bring every pilot on furlough back to active flying—and to keep those pilots in the cockpit now in the air."

Given their past struggles, the pilots are more unified and focused than ever. Constant communications from the MEC, local councils, and various committees have resulted in a motivated and well-informed pilot group that management will find very hard to divide. 

CMR at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1983
Number of Pilots: 1,035 active, 315 furloughed
Headquarters: Erlanger, Ky.
Pilot Domiciles: Cincinnati, Ohio, and New York, N.Y. (JFK)
Fleet: 92 CRJ200s, 15 CRJ700s, 13 CRJ900s

For the 127 pilots of CommutAir, 2009 was certainly a busy year. They essentially built their organization from the bottom up while also entering negotiations on their first contract and dealing with the aftereffects of their partner airline Colgan's Dash 8 crash in Buffalo.

CommutAir

CommutAir Pilots Await Growth as They Build Their Union

By Rusty Ayers, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



Capt. Sebastien Barone and F/O Don Rhoads arrive in Cleveland.

The Continental Connection carrier's pilots joined ALPA in June 2008

after they realized they would be better protected and enjoy a closer relationship with the other pilot groups in the Continental system if they joined ALPA.

The newly elected officers hit the ground running, integrating themselves into the Association's structure and attending as many national gatherings as possible. CMT leaders and volunteers were prominent at ALPA's Leadership Conference, IT Conference, Secretary-Treasurer's Conference, Fee-for-Departure-Carrier MEC Summit, and Executive Board meetings.

"It's been like drinking from a fire hose at times, but we built a union in a year—with a lot of help," says Capt. Shawn Marcin, the pilots' Master Executive Council chairman. "We've set up all the committees we've deemed necessary and have created all the structures. We've just seen many volunteers come forward to help us set up the shell to where we are now, and it's all going very well."

The first two committees the MEC was able to fully staff were Negotiations and Scheduling. But the group also has volunteers in place doing Safety, Security, Communications, Pilot Assistance, Retirement & Insurance, and Jumpseat work as well. Some Committees, such as Hotels and Grievance, won't be needed until the pilots have a contract.

CommutAir pilots opened negotiations with management in February 2009 and have worked at a fast clip since then, tentatively agreeing to 10 of 31 contract sections. The ALPA team has presented all but two of its openers to management, including the pay, benefits, and R&I sections.

"I think we're on a good pace. We've gone from nothing to having almost everything proposed, and we're in a holding pattern right now, waiting to

hear back from management on our proposals," Marcin says. "I don't want to make any promises, but if the pace continues and both sides stay on task, I think this time next year we can sit down and say 'here's our contract.'"

Most CMT pilots would agree that one of the biggest items they would like to see resolved in their first contract is scheduling. The opening of a new base in Newark, N.J., last fall forced many pilots formerly based in Cleveland, Ohio, to become commuters. The lack of commutable lines and the limited number of pilots available to fly has put a significant strain on the system.

The MEC Scheduling Committee hasn't waited for a new contract to help its fellow pilots' quality of life. The Committee convinced management to buy new computer software to replace the old, inefficient pencil-and-paper method of trip construction. The ALPA volunteers have been trained on the new scheduling system and are looking forward to helping build more pilot-friendly lines.

Marcin and his fellow Council 152 officers were elected to new 3-year terms in November. They are looking forward to 2010 as the year they wrap up contract negotiations, and will work on building a strategic plan, including close collaboration with ALPA's Fee-for-Departure group.

The CommutAir MEC has reached out to strengthen its relationship with the Continental MEC and the pilots of fellow CAL feeders, ExpressJet and Colgan Air. The Cleveland councils of CMT, XJT, and CAL pilots met in a first-ever "CLE Council Summit" in December.

Having avoided a threatened round of furloughs last winter, the future now looks bright for the pilots as the airline has begun hiring again. The signs also indicate that CommutAir could be acquiring new aircraft in the near future, fueling continued growth in the pilot group. Whatever happens, the CMT pilots are prepared.

"The main thing is to not let our progress bog down. It's in both the pilot group's and management's interest to successfully conclude negotiations, and we'll take the steps necessary to improve our position and help the company grow," Marcin concludes. ☺

CMT at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2008

Number of Pilots: 127

Services: A Continental Connection carrier since 2000, CommutAir provides scheduled service to 21 cities in 9 states, the District of Columbia, and Canada. The airline has hubs at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport and Newark Liberty International Airport

Fleet: 16 Bombardier Dash 8-Q200s

During the course of 2009, Continental pilots continued their unified march toward a new contract, laying the framework for intensified negotiations in 2010. The road to "Contract '08" has been long and filled with detours. The effort first began in 2007, when the CAL Master Executive

Council turned down management's offer for a contract extension and

instead convinced management to begin early negotiations for a new contract. The pilots and management exchanged early openers in July 2007 with a focus on improving the non-economic sections of the contract before starting full Section 6 negotiations in April 2008. Work progressed at a steady pace until furlough mitigation, airline industry merger

activity, and rocketing oil prices mandated a strategic delay in negotiations. Continued economic upheaval, more furlough mitigation, and Continental's switch from the SkyTeam Alliance to

the Star Alliance in 2009 brought additional challenges.

Still, the ability of Continental pilots to remain true to their cause is steadfast, and their history is a testament to their resiliency. Continental pilots are a diverse collection born of merged airlines—Texas International, Frontier, People Express, New York Air, Air Micronesia, and four commuter carriers that formed Continental Express (now ExpressJet). Yet this mélange, which could have threatened to split them apart, instead has grown to be a source of pride and strength. And lest we forget, Continental pilots survived a 761-day strike (1983–1985), multiple bankruptcies, and the unionbusting tactics of Frank Lorenzo. Resilient and at times doggedly stubborn, they have rebuilt their union from ashes and finally returned to ALPA in 2001.

The resolve and unity of this pilot group, solidified during 2008 over several very successful informational picketing and family awareness events, remained high throughout 2009. Milestones included informational picketing and a rally at the Continental shareholders' meeting in June, attended by some 260 pilots, and a packed multi-day family unity event held in conjunction with the Cleveland Labor Day Weekend Air Show. The year's efforts culminated in the pilots' presenting their comprehensive Section 6 proposal to management in December, bringing the last of the contract sections to the table.

CAL MEC leaders, along with ALPA's Representation Department staff, have established relationships with the National Mediation Board, congressional leaders, and key government entities such as the FAA and the Department of Transportation as part of their strategy for setting the stage for successful contract talks in 2010. The pilots are seeking to improve four cornerstone areas—job protection, quality of life, benefits, and compensation—which will bring much-deserved advancements to the pilot group and relieve them of the burdens of the concessionary contract that has been in place since April 2005.

For 2010, Continental pilots will undoubtedly continue their record of success. Says Capt. Jay Pierce, the CAL MEC chairman, "We fully recognize that to be successful in achieving our contractual goals and in providing security and job protections as the airline industry reshapes itself, we must be engaged at all levels, from the national level and governmental affairs all the way down to the local level and individual pilots." For this very reason, the CAL MEC has a strategic plan to guide its progress, from inside the Washington Beltway to the kitchen table.

Pierce adds, "All of the pieces are working together under the plan developed by the MEC. The other officers and I have our strategic role. We have extensive ALPA resources at our disposal. The negotiators have laid out the pilots' demands to management; and backed by a pilot group that is ready to provide the necessary leverage, we are primed to achieve the gains necessary in a new contract." 🌐

Continental

Pilots Set The Stage for Successful Contract Talks In 2010

By ALPA Staff



PHOTO BY RICHARD CARSON

Continental pilots are unified as negotiations progress for a new contract.

CAL at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2001
Number of Pilots: 4,891
Number of Pilots on Furlough: 147
Pilot Bases/Hubs: Newark, N.J.; Houston, Tex.; Cleveland, Ohio; Guam
Headquarters: Houston, Tex.
Fleet: 36 B-737-700s, 8 B-737-300s, 34 B-737-500s, 12 B-737-900s, 28 B-737-900ERs, 108 B-737-800s (+9 dedicated to Air Mic), 20 B-777-200s, 12 B-767-400s/400ERs (+4 dedicated to Air Mic), 17 B-757-300s, 41 B-757-200s, 10 B-767-200s, 25 B-787-8/9s on order

Delta

Moving the Best Practices Forward for a Better Future

By Kelly Regus, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



Capt. Archie Smiles, left, and F/O Jon Agne during a flight in a B-757.

DAL at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: Delta—1934, Northwest—1932

Merger: Delta merged with Northwest on Oct. 29, 2008. NWA is now a wholly owned subsidiary pending full operational integration

Number of Pilots: 12,555

Operations: Delta and its Northwest subsidiary fly domestically and internationally with 355 destinations in 64 countries (includes Delta Connection carriers)

Pilot Bases: Minneapolis; Los Angeles; Detroit; Atlanta; Training; Seattle; New York City; Memphis; Salt Lake City; Cincinnati

Headquarters: Atlanta, Ga.

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

Since the January 2009 merger of the Northwest and Delta Master Executive Councils, pilot leaders have focused on integrating the best practices of both pre-merger MECs. Throughout 2009, the integration has been successful, but has also faced challenges. The MEC has maintained its focus on the mission to reverse the decline of, to stabilize, and to improve on the pilots' pay, working conditions, retirement, benefits, and job security—always mindful of safety and security.

In the midst of a global recession, ensuring the relevancy of labor within a worldwide framework is indeed a significant challenge. The Delta MEC works to establish relevancy through a philosophy of proactive engagement.

The pilot leaders remain engaged in numerous legislative matters that may affect Delta pilots. The pilots' Government Affairs Committee works with the International Affairs and Alliance Committee chairman, ALPA National, and many others on legislative and regulatory issues.

Much work was invested to garner bipartisan support for the Worker, Retiree, and Employer Recovery Act of 2008, which provided current and former employees of Delta, Northwest, and others who received bankruptcy-related payments the ability to contribute those funds to a Roth IRA.

Whether it is supporting funding of the FAA reauthorization bill, opposing New York area airport slot auctions, or opposing a hostile takeover attempt, the Delta pilots are active on Capitol Hill.

Proactive engagement in industry-related issues is important in strengthening pilot careers. Following the merger, KLM joined Delta's joint venture agreement with Air France. The Delta MEC worked collaboratively with its union counterparts at Air France and KLM to model a pilot protocol that all the involved unions unanimously adopted. The concepts addressed in the protocol are information sharing, the pilots' share of flying in the joint venture, and mutual assistance and representativeness.

To leverage the strength of the Delta pilot group, it was important to carry out a smooth transition to a single MEC and a seamless integration of the committee

structures. Quickly after merging, a policy manual review committee was established to incorporate the best practices of both pilot groups and present recommendations for a new Delta MEC policy manual. The result was a cohesive document that was unanimously adopted in October.

In keeping with the MEC philosophy of proactive engagement, MEC meetings often include guest speakers. During the past year, speakers have included former ALPA president and current FAA Administrator Randolph Babbitt, U.S. Department of State Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Affairs John Byerly, and professor and author Thomas Kochan, Ph. D.

Most of Delta's and Northwest's standing committees have been consolidated. Many of the committees have had enormous workloads during integration. While every committee

has worked hard to ensure a seamless transition, the Transition Working Group, Scheduling, Training, Retirement and Insurance, and Communications Committees have played major roles during the transition. The following are a few highlights of the work these committees have undertaken:

- The Training Committee has worked closely with Flight Operations to integrate policy and procedures for the two airlines.
- Bid assist facilitators helped to transition pre-merger Northwest pilots to the Delta PBS (scheduling) system.
- The R&I Committee and staff worked tirelessly through the first benefits enrollment to educate all pilots on available options. A number of outreach efforts—including 3,500 visits to a webinar—addressed more than 7,000 pilot inquiries.

The Delta MEC will continue to pursue and implement many initiatives to improve the careers of Delta pilots. The MEC seeks opportunities and remains committed to advancing the interests of the pilot group it represents, the largest in the world. 🌐

Compass

A change to the current Delta MEC structure is the approaching representational restructuring for Compass Airlines pilots. On March 1, 2010, Compass will establish its own MEC.

Stay tuned for a pilot group profile on Compass in the March issue.

After joining ALPA 2 years ago, Evergreen crewmembers continue their 5-year battle with management to secure a new, fair contract. The battle has been elongated by high fuel prices in 2007 and the sour economy in 2008 and 2009. The crewmembers and management have met

Evergreen

Pilots Work Hard Toward Securing a New Contract

By Tawnya Burket, ALPA Communications Specialist



F/O Chip Carter prepares for a flight.

off and on with little progress at the negotiating table while the crewmembers continue working under 1999 wages and contract rules. The last negotiating session took place in August 2009 with management requesting concessions from the crewmembers—the first request of this nature, which quickly prompted the Evergreen Master Executive Council and Negotiating Committee into action. The pilot group leaders conducted a series of crewmember-wide conference calls and a web-based survey to inform the members about the situation and to request their guidance to plan a course of action upon reaching this crossroad.

“We are faced with tough decisions. Unity and the backing of our crewmembers are the keys to moving forward with these negotiations. We have to be prepared to fight for a fair contract, and we cannot do that without our members’ complete support,” says Professional Flight Engineer William Fink, chairman of the Evergreen MEC.

The MEC Negotiating Committee will resume mediated talks with a federal mediator at the end of January. And, if necessary, the MEC’s Strategic Planning and Strike Committee (SPSC) is ready to spool up operations with guidance from the Association’s SPSC and Representation, Legal, and Communications Departments. Since joining ALPA, the Committee conducted a successful informational picketing event at New York’s John F. Kennedy International Airport cargo operations in October 2008 with support from Delta and ASTAR Air Cargo pilots. Twenty-five ALPA pilots participated in the picketing, the first such event ever for the group, which also ran mobile billboards in Miami, Fla., and McMinnville, Ore.,

Evergreen’s corporate headquarters.

“The battle has been long, and our crewmembers remain loyal, dedicated employees who are committed to our airline’s successful future. With the economy recovering and fuel prices remaining stable, the time has come for management to reward its crewmembers for the demands of this profession and respect the work that we do to keep operations on schedule under sometimes very challenging conditions,” says Fink.

Evergreen crewmembers have supported the U.S. armed forces by flying thousands of missions worldwide for the Air Mobility Command since 1975. Crewmembers are also counted on for their professionalism and experience when it comes to global humanitarian relief missions and Department of Defense support through the Civilian Reserve Air Fleet.

From the start of 2001 through December 2009, Evergreen has flown thousands of missions for the Air Mobility Command with its Boeing 747 modified freighters. The majority of these missions supported Operation Enduring Freedom, Southern Watch, Iraqi Freedom, and the U.S. troops in Iraq and Afghanistan. Evergreen has flown more than 120,000 hours worldwide from approximately 30 military bases in the U.S., Europe, the Middle East, and the Far East. Evergreen also operates weekly flights from Hong Kong’s Chek Lap Kok International Airport and Shanghai’s Pudong International Airport, carrying cargo to and from JFK and other major cargo hubs within the United States. Evergreen is also a leading company for one-time contract airlift services with its B-747 fleet configured with side doors and front loaders available for bulky or oversized cargo.

Evergreen began operating a contract for Boeing Aircraft Corporation using highly modified B-747-400s, the Dreamlifter, approximately 2 years ago. Evergreen crewmembers are the sole highly trained operators of this Boeing LCF fleet of three B-747 freighters (with a fourth scheduled to arrive soon) used to transport large segments of the new Boeing 787 Dreamliner from factories in Nagoya, Japan, and Grottaglie, Italy, for partial assembly in Charleston, S.C., and then final assembly in the Everett, Wash., plant. 🌐

EIA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2007
Number of Crewmembers: 212
Headquarters: McMinnville, Ore.
Pilot Bases: New York (JFK);
Charleston, S.C.; Travis AFB, Calif.;
Everett, Wash.
Fleet: 9 B-747-200 freighters, 1 B-747
Supertanker, 3 B-747-400 LCFs

ExpressJet is vastly different from the company it was just one year ago, and more changes are afoot. Its success is due to a combination of a cooperative, functional labor-management relationship and a viable business plan designed to produce results for all of the company's stakeholders.

ExpressJet

ExpressJet Pilots On a Path to a Brighter Future

By Lydia Jakub, ALPA Communications Specialist



ExpressJet operates 234 Embraer-145 LR and XR.

XJT at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2004 (the former Continental Express was split from Continental and two separate MECs were established—Continental and ExpressJet)

Number of Pilots: 2,805, including 347 on furlough (before recall)

Operations: Flies more than 40,000 passengers per day to 130 destinations in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean with approximately 1,100 departures daily

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

Headquarters: Houston, Tex.

Fleet: 234 EMB-145 LR and XRs

ExpressJet's future and that of its pilots looks bright because of the pilots' hard

work, dedication, and sacrifices.

In August 2009, the ExpressJet Master Executive Council elected officers to begin terms on September 1. Capt. Chris Cashmareck was elected to serve as the MEC chairman, Capt. Chris Malo was reelected vice-chairman, and Capt. Eric Stoltz was reelected secretary-treasurer.

Management has also announced changes. ExpressJet President and Chief Executive Officer Jim Ream retired from the airline at the end of 2009, after 15 years of combined service to ExpressJet and its former parent, Continental. During his tenure, Ream was a strong advocate for building and maintaining positive labor relations. By keeping the pilot group informed and engaged, Ream successfully positioned ExpressJet as a leader in the competitive regional industry. A member of the ExpressJet Board of Directors will assume his position until a replacement is found, and the pilots anticipate being included in the search and selection process.

Meanwhile, the company has again begun to reshape its business model. ExpressJet engaged in short-term contracts with United Airlines in the summer of 2009, and from December 2009 through April 2010. The company was recently awarded multiyear Capacity Purchase Agreements (CPA) for 22 EMB-145s to begin service in May 2010. The number of aircraft will vary but is anticipated to be as great as 32 during the summer months.

Because of the new CPAs with United, recall notices were sent out in December 2009 and classes are scheduled for January, February, and March. ExpressJet management will reevaluate the schedules for Continental, United, and charter flying to determine whether additional recalls are necessary. Additionally, the pilots are

continuing a dialogue with management to ensure the airline is adequately staffed and can operate at the highest level. The MEC expressed its position of keeping a higher percentage of captains during the last round of furloughs and downgrades by continuing reduced flying lines and reintroducing "no fly" lines. Not only was it the right thing to do to mitigate staffing changes, but the pilots also believe it helped enable the company to capture additional flying.

"The fact that ExpressJet is recalling pilots is a direct result of our group's dedication and professionalism," says Cashmareck. "We have one of the airline industry's leading contracts, and management worked with us to implement creative solutions that retained extra pilots and aircraft. As a result, the company was able to move quickly and secure additional flying opportunities without pilot concessions."

The MEC has also focused its efforts to improve the pilots' contract, specifically related to safety and training. In 2009, the MEC and management signed an agreement modifying the Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) at ExpressJet. The agreement provides that no pilot will be disciplined for any event accepted into ASAP; this includes fatigue calls, which were brought under ASAP at the same time. Additionally, the Training Department is transitioning to an Advanced Qualification Program (AQP) with input from the pilots.

Currently, the ExpressJet MEC leaders are preparing for Section 6 negotiations and developing a plan to achieve a new collective bargaining agreement that addresses the changing nature of their flying and meets the needs of the pilot group. The MEC is also working to learn more about and prioritize the issues and concerns of pilots who fly charters. The MEC is developing a comprehensive proposal as the contract becomes amendable in November 2010.

"ExpressJet is on a path to a brighter future," concludes Cashmareck. "There will be many opportunities and challenges ahead as we work with management to rebuild our airline and repay our pilots. We are prepared to address every one of these situations appropriately so our company—and our pilots—may prosper." ☺

FedEx

The FedEx Pilots: Preparations for a Busy 2010 Begin

By Courtney Bland, ALPA Communications Specialist



FedEx F/O Amy Himic at the controls of an MD-11.

The past year has been challenging for the pilots of Memphis-based FedEx Express. Just like their passenger-carrying counterparts, the FedEx pilots have been struggling to manage the negative consequences of the global economic crisis. On top of that, the year was marked by the loss of Capt. Kevin Mosley and F/O Tony Pino in a tragic accident at Narita Airport near Tokyo, Japan.

However, several exemplary FedEx pilots were singled out for their diligent efforts in improving the piloting profession. During ALPA's Annual Air Safety Forum in Washington, D.C., held in August 2009, Capt. Dave Wells was honored with ALPA's Air Safety Award, and the first ALPA Pilot Assistance Award was bestowed posthumously on Capt. John Lux. Additionally, Capt. Bill McReynolds, Capt. Val Thal-Slocum, and F/O Rich Odbert

were awarded ALPA Presidential Citations. Their efforts on behalf of their fellow pilots serve as a model that the FedEx pilots hope others within their ranks will emulate.

The FedEx pilots are encouraged by the addition of two new airframes to


their fleet, the B-777 and B-757. The B-777 was added to replace the delivery of the Airbus A380 when the delivery schedule from Airbus Industrie became unmanageable. FedEx is about to take delivery of its third B-777, and the FedEx pilots hope that they can reach an agreement with management concerning the pay and work rules for the aircraft. With the recent addition of a Hong Kong pilot base, and the potential addition of a European pilot base, the FedEx pilots will face interesting challenges and opportunities. Though the pilot group has suffered setbacks due to management's decision to scale down operations, the pilots hope that the above-mentioned developments will return them to the outstanding career growth potential they have enjoyed in the past.

Currently, the FedEx pilots are gearing up for contract openers as their contract becomes amendable on October 31. While the twists and turns of the last year have been challenging, the unity and resolve of the FedEx pilots will provide the support required for successful negotiations.

"Unity is not just part of the success equation, it is the entire equation. It is this unity that will allow us to move forward and be successful in ratifying another industry-leading contract," says Capt. Scott Stratton, the Master Executive Council chairman.

The MEC's Negotiating Committee is eager to start talks with management and is actively building consensus among the pilots and setting the contract goals for 2010. The Committee has been polling the pilots for quite some time to assess the issues that matter most to the pilot group as a whole. The MEC and key committees continue to hold strategic planning sessions to determine the best course of action to support negotiations.

FedEx's 4,603 pilots are spread across six councils and four domiciles, including the recently opened Hong Kong foreign duty assignment base. Distance always poses a challenge when it comes to communications with the pilots, but the MEC officers and Unity Team members have been traveling to the domiciles, including Hong Kong, for face-to-face meetings with the pilots. Additionally, the MEC is using updated quarterly newsletters, e-mail updates, and a new *FDX Pilots* website to provide the most current information to its pilots.

With more than 375 airports served worldwide, FedEx has an extensive and varied fleet. FedEx delivers approximately 3.3 million packages daily to 220 countries and territories, including every address in the United States. 

FDX at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: June 1993-1996; rejoined ALPA in June 2002

First ALPA Contract: October 2006

Number of Flightcrew Members:

4,603

Headquarters: Memphis, Tenn.

Fleet: 73 B-727s, 21 B-757s, 117 A300/310s, 75 MD-10s, 59 MD-11s, 3 B-777s

Change is in the air at Canadian carrier First Air, where new aircraft, new management, and upcoming collective bargaining negotiations will challenge the pilot group in 2010.

First Air, an airline wholly owned by the Makivik Corporation, flies to a number of communities in the Canadian Arctic.

First Air cockpit crewmembers joined ALPA in 2008, in the middle of a 4-year contract that's set to end December 2010. Even though contract talks haven't begun yet, Capt. Jamie Biggs, the pilots' Master Executive Council chairman, says the 154 pilots and flight engineers of "The Airline of the North" are already enjoying the advantages of ALPA.

"We came from an 'in house' association where all the work was shouldered by a very select few, and 99.9 percent of that work was strictly labour relations, but after joining ALPA we became a team," Biggs explains.

"There are a lot more people involved, and while the labour relations aspect is still a major role, we have established several committees working for our members on multiple levels. It is very obvious that joining ALPA was a brilliant step for us, and everyone is enjoying the benefits."

One major benefit the crewmembers now enjoy is jumpseat access. FAB's new Jumpseat Committee has successfully concluded more than 10 reciprocal agreements with a number of carriers, including Air Canada Jazz, Air Transat, Bearskin, Hawaiian, Mesaba, and United, enabling crewmembers who live on the east and west coasts to commute to their northern bases, greatly improving their quality of life.

The new jumpseat agreements are an example of the improved relations the FAB group has had with management since First Air replaced its senior management personnel more than a year ago. Instead of arguing with its labor groups, the new management team has taken a collaborative approach that should make upcoming contract negotiations easier, according to Biggs.

"Overall, it has been very positive. We are enjoying a good working relationship and while things get tough sometimes,

there is an attitude of fair play and at the end of the day handshakes prevail. The professionalism on both sides is refreshing," he says.


In preparation for the upcoming contract talks, the FAB MEC has already appointed its negotiators, who will be trained by the Association later this year. The leaders have also begun polling members to learn their contract priorities.

"We're optimistic that although negotiations will be tough, the results will be positive. We feel our existing contract is where it should be, and our main goal will be to clean up existing language and to modernize," Biggs declares.

The major contract change in 2009 was a letter of agreement that allowed the airline to acquire a new B-767-200 freighter to replace one of its aging B-727 freighters. The new B-767 was the first of what's expected to be several more fleet upgrades in the next few years, as work moves forward to replace some of the carrier's B-737-200s with newer B-737-500s and establish a training regime to transition pilots to the new aircraft. Not all of First Air's -200s will be leaving, however, because some will still be needed for their ability to operate on gravel runways, one of the many characteristics unique to operations in the high Arctic regions.

Another successful initiative with management has been the introduction of a Safety Management System (SMS) at the airline. While SMS programs have been somewhat controversial in the Canadian news media, the increased focus on safety has been a commercial and financial win, especially with the mining and exploration companies that make up a major portion of First Air's charter business.

There are some dark clouds on the horizon, however. Air Canada and WestJet recently began service to Yellowknife, and Air Canada will extend service into Iqaluit this spring. Both northern destinations have traditionally been served exclusively by First Air and another airline.

While the competition from these far larger carriers will have an impact, customer loyalty, combined with the training and experience of the First Air crews, should win the day. 

First Air

First Air: Focused On the Future

By Rusty Ayers, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



F/E Jeremy Studney with one of the First Air Hercules freighters.

FAB at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2008

Number of Crewmembers: 154

Headquarters: Kanata, Ont.

Pilot Bases: Edmonton, Alb.; Ottawa, Ont.; Yellowknife, NT; and Iqaluit, NU

Fleet: 1 B-767-200F, 6 B-737-200s (four in combi configuration for cargo), 1 B-727-200 (combi), 2 L-382G Hercules freighters, 8 ATR 42-300s (all combi), 1 HS 748 (combi)

The pilots of Hawaiian Airlines are near the finish line of their 3-year effort to link their airline's superior performance to improved pay and benefits for its employees.

Negotiators for the pilots and management reached a tentative agreement on December 18 after nearly 2 weeks of grueling, nonstop bargaining under the supervision of federal mediators, including a marathon final session that lasted almost 36 hours.

The HAL Master Executive Council has unanimously endorsed the tentative agreement, and at press time the group was holding road shows to inform its members about the deal.

"The MEC believes this is the fair and affordable contract we fought so long for," says Capt. Eric Sampson, the MEC chairman. "It includes significant improvements in pay and retirement, while at the same time preserving and strengthening important work rules and other important areas of our contract. We're pleased we were able to develop new and innovative approaches that we believe bring value to both the pilots and the company."

The proposed 68-month agreement would include double-digit pay increases and profit-sharing for HAL's widebody and interisland pilots and increased company retirement contributions.

"One of the major goals for this round of contract negotiations was to ensure that every pilot whose defined benefit pension was frozen and replaced with a target benefit pension during the 2005 bankruptcy would receive the same benefit level they would have had under the old system, and we're confident that with these changes we will achieve that," Sampson adds.

By any standard, Hawaiian must be considered one of the most successful carriers in the United States. It consistently leads the industry in on-time performance and customer satisfaction, and earned record profits through the worst of the economic downturn that has staggered other airlines. In fact, HAL's record earnings make it among the three most profitable domestic airlines in the U.S.

HAL has added new B-717s to its interisland fleet, has installed new, fuel-


efficient winglets on its B-767s that save an estimated 5,000 pounds of fuel per flight segment, and is moving forward with a \$4 billion order from Airbus that will bring long-range A330s (and eventually A350s) into the fleet beginning this April. It is hiring hundreds of new employees as it adds new destinations and codeshare partners.

Hawaiian left bankruptcy in mid-2005 thanks in part to concessionary contracts with its pilots and other labor groups. Negotiations began in early 2007, and the bankruptcy-era agreement became amendable that summer. Management's negotiators insisted from the outset that any new contract be cost-neutral for the airline, but the pilots refused to accept the flat contract that management expected. Private mediation efforts failed in mid-2008, and the pilots and management entered federal mediation in September 2008.

In August 2009, the HAL MEC opened a strategic preparedness center next to Honolulu International Airport. In September, it took a strike authorization vote, and 94 percent of the airline's more than 400 pilots cast ballots. Of those voters, 98 percent gave their leaders the go-ahead to call a strike if the National Mediation Board (NMB) released the two parties into self-help.

By October the MEC decided talks had reached an impasse and asked the NMB to release Hawaiian from mediation. The Board, however, decided to give the two sides one more chance at reaching a deal and scheduled the mediation round in early December that ultimately resulted in a tentative agreement.

The MEC's slogan for its campaign was "Pupukahi I Holomua," a Hawaiian saying that can be translated to mean "pull together" or "unite as one." Sampson credits the pilots' unity as the decisive factor in the group's victory, and is looking forward to harnessing that momentum to help the airline grow.

"With Hawaiian having just celebrated its 80th anniversary, we're very excited about the future," Sampson says. "We're confident we will begin the New Year with a new contract that recognizes us as full partners in the company so that we can resume our efforts of keeping Hawaiian the best airline in the Pacific." 

Hawaiian

Pilots Near the Finish Line

By Rusty Ayers, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



The crew in the B-717 cockpit is Capt. Kelly Kamaka and F/O Paul Morgan (formerly with Aloha). Kelly's brother Patrick was recently hired at Hawaiian and was also formerly at Aloha.

HAL at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1948

Number of Pilots: 436

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 interisland fleet provides essential service for kama'aina (Hawaiian residents) and visitors alike between the islands of Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii.

Fleet: 14 B-767-300ERs, 4 B-767-300s, 19 B-717-200s. On order: 15 A330s, 12 A350XWBs

For Island Air pilots, 2009 was a breakthrough year. After 16 months of contract negotiations with management, the pilots ratified a new collective bargaining agreement in June 2009. And the new 4-year agreement came with immediate improvements, including wage increases, work rule advances, and furlough protections.

Island Air

Island Air Pilots Ratify New Contract

By Lydia Jakub, ALPA Communications Specialist

"Faced with many challenges throughout the negotiations process, we believe the result speaks for itself," says Capt. Charlie Cizek, the pilots' MEC chairman.

The result: During the next 4 years, Island Air pilots will receive wage increases totaling 12 percent and other economic and work rule improvements that will increase compensation. Reserve guarantee increased to 70 hours; minimum day increased to 3.8 hours; daily show time was maintained; new taxi pay was achieved and will be paid on top of guarantee; per diem increased nearly 38 percent to \$55 per day; a release delay fee will be paid on top of guarantee to pilots who are not released from duty within 30 minutes of block-in; and a mechanical delay fee will be paid to pilots in the event of such an occurrence. Additionally, vacation accrual was increased and sick leave pay caps were raised.

The agreement also provided furlough protection for 48 pilot positions—the number of active pilots on the date the tentative agreement was reached—until 90 days prior to the contract amendable date. An additional six pilots, representing the number of pilots on leaves of absence or working under flex bids at the time, may move in seniority order onto the "protected list" during the duration of the agreement in the event of attrition by any of the original 48 protected pilots. However, pilots may be furloughed if capacity drops below agreed-upon levels.

The final noteworthy change concerned adjustments to segment times to move them closer to realistic, historical averages. Pilots are now paid the greater of contractual segment time (i.e., scheduled average time), actual flight time, and scheduled block time. Scheduled average times will be reviewed every 2 years and adjusted accordingly based upon historical average times. Flight

times will be recorded in minutes, but converted to tenths of an hour and averaged based upon rounding upward to the nearest tenth of an hour. Currently, the pilots and management are disputing the calculation of flight times and a grievance is pending resolution.

The contract victory, though long-awaited, was also short-lived. Interisland travel declined sharply soon after the agreement was ratified, and this unfortunate trend continued throughout 2009, making the market ripe for competition. While Hawaiian Airlines remains the dominant interisland carrier, Republic-owned Mokulele Airlines entered into this competitive market, joining *go!*, an interisland subsidiary of Mesa Air Group. Island Air and *go!* then entered into a codeshare agreement, and a new round of interisland fare wars began. However, Island Air management elected not to engage in the latest fare war and instead implemented dramatic capacity cuts and furloughed nearly a dozen pilots. It is unclear when management intends to return to previous capacity levels.

Recently, Island Air's Ohana culture—extended family looking out for one another—has also deteriorated, which could be attributed to the fairly aggressive approach management began taking with the pilots in March. Grievances, which were once virtually nonexistent at Island Air, have been filed over management's novel interpretation of new language in the pilots' recently amended collective bargaining agreement. Management has reinterpreted furlough language, as well as language pertaining to how segment times are calculated for pay purposes to avoid paying pilots by the method agreed upon. Though only one arbitration has been conducted in the past 4 years, two cases are currently scheduled for arbitration in early 2010.

"We hope management soon realizes that maintaining a positive relationship with its pilots will yield better results than spending an exorbitant amount of time and money on lawyers and arbitrations," says Cizek. "Management needs to start abiding by the contract and focus on positioning Island Air to take advantage of the anticipated industry improvements in 2010 and beyond. Working together, our company will succeed." 🌐

AIS at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1989

Number of Pilots: Approximately 45, including 15 on furlough

Operations: Approximately 36 daily flights plus charter service to all eight major airports in Hawaii

Service: Island Air is Hawaii's leading regional carrier, serving airports on all major Hawaiian Islands with approximately 250 weekly flights between the islands of Oahu, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, Kauai, and the island of Hawaii

Fleet: 4 Dash 8-100s

Island Air F/O Terry Salazar.

Kelowna Flightcraft

Kelowna Pilots Flying High With New Contract

By David Fisher, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



Capt. Erv Schleith checks in with Flight Ops and with F/O Dave Kitson and S/O Ross Caddell.

KFC at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1997 (became an ALPA-represented pilot group when CALPA merged with ALPA)

First ALPA Contract: Nov. 1, 1997

Number of Pilots: 125

Headquarters: Kelowna, B.C.

Pilot Bases: Hamilton, Ont.; Vancouver, B.C.; Halifax, N.S.; Thunder Bay, Ont.; Regina, Sask.; Calgary, Alb.; Kelowna, B.C.

Fleet: B-727s, Convair 580s, DC-10s

The past year was a memorable one for the Kelowna Flightcraft pilots. Despite the gloomy news about a slowing economy and unstable fuel prices, the KFC Master Executive Council worked with management to finalize a collective bargaining agreement that includes wage increases

and improvements in quality of life. After 14 months of tenuous contract negotiations, the pilots ratified a 6-year agreement in January 2009, which became effective in November 2009.

The new contract is a complete language rewrite from cover to cover, which leaves little room for interpretation. The agreement includes language that provides better structure for maintaining staffing levels so that additional pilot hiring is required when overtime levels have been reached or are projected to reach certain levels. This quality-of-life improvement allows the Kelowna pilots to have more control over their schedules and reduces involuntary overtime. The contract also provides significant wage increases in the range of 10–12 percent, and an additional 9 percent in longevity increases over 5 years.

Capt. Ian Gold, the newly elected MEC chairman, is proud of the accomplishments by the pilots' Negotiating Committee, past MEC officers, and the pilots. "Thanks to our negotiators and the support of our dedicated union staff, our pilots have been justly rewarded for their loyalty and constant professionalism," Gold says. "They should be extremely proud of their contributions that have resulted in the company's success."

Even with a new contract in hand, Gold has no intentions of taking it easy. With the support of MEC committee volunteers, the motivated pilot group plans to ensure that management adheres to the provisions in their agreement. Gold says, "We now have stricter contract language, but we also hope to continue what has been a cooperative relationship with our employer, whenever possible, to successfully resolve any grievance

issues that might arise."

In addition to keeping a vigilant watch over contract enforcement, the MEC is focused on maintaining the unity that the pilot group demonstrated during the negotiations process: "The team effort that developed during the past year bodes well for the future of our pilot group. More than ever, our pilots know we are an integral part of Kelowna's continued success," Gold declares.

With members spread across six time zones and some 5,700 miles from coast to coast, it has been challenging to keep the group connected and well-informed about the many benefits ALPA membership provides. With assistance from ALPA's Communications Department staff, the MEC recently began sending regularly scheduled e-mail newsletters to its pilot members and is presently working on a new KFC MEC website that will feature useful and timely information. Plans are also in the works to introduce family awareness events in Kelowna hub cities once the long Canadian winter passes.

Collectively, the pilot group has chosen to take steps toward building an improved career path that will also benefit the company so that, together, they can focus on growth. Kelowna Flightcraft is one of only two freight airlines in Canada providing widebody, heavy-lift dedicated airplanes and is keen on capitalizing on the expanding demand of this niche market. With the new pilot contract in place, management can now turn its focus on expanding the widebody fleet.

Kelowna Flightcraft moves approximately 600,000 pounds of freight every night and about 300,000 additional pounds for Canada Post. Add it up and it is evident that Canadian commerce depends heavily on the Kelowna pilots pushing nearly a million pounds of freight across the country each night.

Besides moving freight with B-727s and Convair 580s on behalf of Purolator Courier, Kelowna Flightcraft, which has become Canada's third largest airline, provides dedicated DC-10 cargo service for Canada Post. The pilots of Kelowna Flightcraft are spread across domiciles that range from Halifax, N.S., to Vancouver, B.C. 

Mesa

Pilots Ready To Tackle Road Ahead

By Lydia Jakub, ALPA Communications Specialist



Capt. Tyson Hasse and F/O Andrew Tam.

MAG at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1987

Number of Pilots: Nearly 1,200 (233 on furlough)

Operations: Mesa Air Group includes Mesa, go!, and Freedom Airlines and operates as Delta Connection, US Airways Express, and United Express under contractual agreements, and independently as Mesa Airlines and go! Serves 126 cities, 40 states, Canada, and Mexico with approximately 800 daily departures

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

Headquarters: Phoenix, Ariz.

Fleet: 136 aircraft, including CRJ100s/200s, CRJ700s, CRJ900s, ERJ-145s, and Dash 8-200s

Mesa Air Group became the first airline of the year to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, filing on January 5 in the U.S. Bankruptcy Court in the Southern District of New York. The steady decline in the U.S. economy had a tremendous effect on MAG and its partners, and in the end, it came down to money and too many parked aircraft. With contracts set to expire, United exercised its right to terminate its Dash 8 and CRJ200 flying with MAG. These 36 aircraft are scheduled to cease operations by April. Meanwhile, the legal battle between MAG and Delta continues to work its way through the court system. MAG was granted an injunction in 2009, barring Delta from terminating its contract and is seeking \$70 million in damages from Delta. With little

to no demand for new aircraft in the marketplace, MAG was forced to file for bankruptcy to eliminate the excess aircraft. The bankruptcy process will allow MAG to restructure its fleet and debt so that it meets the flying needs of its partners

and remains competitive for future business opportunities.

"Labor costs are clearly not the problem, and management indicated that it will honor our existing collective bargaining agreement," says Capt. Kevin Wilson, the pilots' Master Executive Council chairman. "Our new contract places us firmly among the leaders in the regional airline industry while allowing the company to remain competitive. We are proud of the great strides we have made for our pilots in a challenging economic climate; however, our work is far from over."

MAG pilots ratified a new collective bargaining agreement that contained significant improvements in December 2008. Among the improvements are scheduled vs. actual pay provisions, a line guarantee with cancellation pay and equipment protection pay, a 75.83-

hour minimum monthly guarantee, a minimum of 11 days off for lineholders and reserves, more vacation time, and a 200 percent premium for improper reassignments. The pilots also maintained their industry-leading scope provisions. Additionally, the pilots changed to a monthly bidding cycle and are using preferential bidding software (PBS).

The contract contained a provision that allowed the pilots or management to cancel PBS by providing notice to the other party by Jan. 1, 2010; otherwise, PBS would become a permanent part of the contract. On Dec. 31, 2009, management served the pilots with notice of its intent to terminate PBS and its associated provisions after failing to leverage the pilot group to again pay for the scheduling program. Before management's decision, the parties were engaged in discussions to address PBS-related issues. Management verbally committed to resolving the issues but came back with a document that included none of the resolutions. Additionally, management abruptly turned those discussions into ones about settling or withdrawing the grievances pertaining to scheduled vs. actual, sick pay, and cancellation pay. This issue is far from over. The pilots responded to management's letter and will continue to seek clarification until the matter is resolved.

Under the new contract, MAG pilots have received an additional \$1.6 million in pay; however, this amount does not factor in additional money that the pilots believe they are owed. In 2009, ALPA secured more than \$200,000 for MAG pilots through the grievance process. While both sides worked through the backlog of grievances that arose during Section 6 negotiations, several complex cases have yet to be resolved. The union has secured six arbitration dates over the next few months so that a neutral arbitrator can hear the grievances that cannot be resolved and determine the appropriate awards.

"Our lives and our airline have changed dramatically in a short amount of time, and if recent events are any indication, more challenges lie ahead," says Wilson. "We are prepared to face these challenges and address them head-on in order to protect and defend the rights and jobs of MAG pilots." 🌐

The many dramatic events that the Mesaba pilots have faced over recent years have more than tested their survivor skills, and they've proven they are not easily defeated. These crewmembers have endured their share of adversity, including former owner MAIR Holdings' decision to siphon

resources from the airline to bolster its low-cost, non-ALPA subsidiary, Big Sky; a hostile bankruptcy complete with multiple 1113(c) filings by a management determined to sidestep its contractual obligations; a new owner (Northwest Airlines); and a merger (between Northwest and Delta Air Lines).

In spite of these challenges, Mesaba has survived to become an important component of the Delta Connection network—a testament to the vision, unity, and perseverance of its pilots.

"We recently received the third of four snap-backs in our agreement," says second-term Master Executive chairman, Capt. Mark Nagel, a CRJ900 pilot based in Detroit, Mich., referring to provisions in the pilot contract that allow pay rates to snap back to previous, more favorable terms. "These adjustments raise

our earnings by about 4 percent above pre-bankruptcy pay rates and that percentage will double by December 2010. At that time, work rules will also return to the terms we had before Mesaba's bankruptcy."

The pilots, however, aren't completely out of the woods yet. "We aren't exactly where we thought we would be at this point," Nagel says. Despite the pilots' tenacity in overcoming adversity, they still face some significant challenges.


Post-merger Delta began rethinking its wholly owned regional carrier operation, which also includes Comair and Compass. Consequently, Delta's fleet decisions regarding Mesaba have curbed the airline's previously projected growth.

Mesaba was slated to receive 15 CRJ900s between January and May 2009. However, Delta decided to redirect 10 of the 15 to Atlantic Southeast Airlines. In addition, Delta and Mesaba are exercising an option to return 23 of the regional carrier's 49 Saab SF340s to the manufacturer. Although Mesaba pilots have seen some increased flying in and out of Delta's Salt Lake City hub, the fleet reduction has resulted in approximately 130 furloughed pilots since August 2009, with roughly 70 more furloughs planned for 2010.

In October 2009, the preferential bidding system (PBS) provisions, negotiated as part of the 2006 bankruptcy agreement, went into effect. The use of PBS is intended to improve pilot quality of life because, in theory, it permits pilots to indicate preferred days off, desired pairings, start and finish times, and other line characteristics. "We negotiated a lot of protections with this system, but without management's cooperation to explore ideas to improve scheduling, overall, the schedules have become worse using PBS," declares Nagel, who says that crew planning hasn't taken full advantage of the program's features.

Capt. Joe Tober, a Saab pilot and the MEC's PBS Committee chairman, reports that he has consulted with other ALPA pilot groups using the same PBS software and that they have experienced more favorable results. "We are eager to learn from them," says Tober, who adds that he remains hopeful management will work with the Mesaba pilots to build quality schedules while ensuring that the airline's flying is adequately covered.

"As we look forward, we hope to mend relations with management," Nagel says. "We want to return our furloughed pilots to Mesaba cockpits, reduce the large number of pending grievances, and strive for better pilot schedules. Accomplishing these goals will improve morale and job satisfaction, conditions that should maximize our company's performance."

Mesaba was founded in July 1944, making it the longest-flying regional airline in the United States. The name, Mesaba, comes from the Ojibwa (also known as the Chippewa) tribe of Native Americans and means "soaring eagle." 

Mesaba

Mesaba Pilots: A New Day, a New Set of Challenges

By John Perkinson, Staff Writer



Capt. Henning Christie sits at the controls of his aircraft.

MSA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1987

Number of Pilots: 1,146 total (161 on furlough)

Headquarters: Eagan, Minn.

Pilot Bases: Minneapolis/St. Paul, Minn.; Detroit, Mich.; and Memphis, Tenn.

Fleet: Saab SF340s, Bombardier CRJ200s, CRJ900s

Last December, the pilots of North American Airlines made a choice about their representation: a powerful 96 percent of the NAA pilots who voted in the representation election chose ALPA over the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT)—their collective bargaining representative before the election.

The change in representation came as a result of the pilots' frustration over management's disregard for the pilots' contract and a union, when it

became involved, that often took action on the pilots' behalf without consulting them or getting their feedback.

"Having witnessed the vote tally..., it was clear that the election result was an overwhelming endorsement of the need for change in how our contract is being interpreted by North American," said the pilots' Master Executive Council officers in a letter to NAA's senior vice-president and COO.

Indeed, contract enforcement is the top priority for the pilots as they begin their work to build their union. "A key aspect of our mission will be to protect and administer our contract with every available ALPA resource and prepare for our next round of collective bargaining," says Capt. Al Gallo, the pilot group's MEC chairman. "Our management has never had to deal with


the power of a unified pilot group with the resources of a committed national union. With ALPA representing us, they do now," he adds.

The MEC officers, along with the chairmen of the pilots' Membership, Grievance, and Central Air Safety Committees, came to Herndon, Va., the first week in January to learn more about the resources available to them and their pilots through ALPA. While all of the NAA representatives who attended the orientation and training had been ALPA members previously, meeting with the staff, national officers, and other ALPA pilot leaders underscored their reasons

for choosing ALPA as their bargaining representative.

The new NAA reps learned how ALPA's Representation Department helps pilots prepare for negotiations, plan strategically, and enforce their contract. The IT Department demonstrated an online grievance form that the NAA pilots agreed they would implement immediately to facilitate grievance processing. As much of their flying is international, they also took special notice of the benefits available to the pilots through ALPA's affiliation with IFALPA and the access they have to information worldwide through the Association's website.

During the 2-day meeting, the MEC officers and committee chairmen learned more about ALPA's structure and how the Finance, Membership and Council Services, and Purchasing Departments help the officers and status reps set up their operations and conduct business. They also learned how the Communications, Economic and Financial Analysis, and Retirement and Insurance Departments work with the MEC to gather and evaluation information, make strategic decisions, and implement initiatives to advance their pilot group's goals. They heard from Engineering and Air Safety Department staff about the vast resources, programs, and support available to their pilots regarding aviation safety and security and received a briefing from Government Affairs staff on the legislative and regulatory initiatives ALPA is undertaking to further airline pilots' interests. Throughout the orientation, the NAA pilots focused their questions and comments on how they could best use these services and staff expertise and experience to their pilots' advantage.

In the coming weeks, the pilots will be tapping into these resources as they implement an aggressive membership drive, establish their MEC and committees, and build their "new union." As the MEC officers said in a New Year's message to the pilots, "We strongly believe that we can work within the contract to achieve our goals of job security, improved quality of life, and total transparency of all actions taken by both NAA [management] and the MEC.... We look forward to the challenges ahead because we now have...the commitment and resources of ALPA." 

North American

Pilots Build a New Union with ALPA Resources

By Barbara Gottshalk
ALPA Lead Communications Specialist



NAA MEC officers meet in ALPA's Herndon, Va., offices for orientation.

NAA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2009

Number of Pilots: 190

Pilot Base: New York (JFK)

Headquarters: Jamaica, N.Y.

Operations: North American Airlines provides worldwide charter operations for the U.S. military, tour operators, government agencies, sports teams, and other airlines

Fleet: 5 B-767-300ERs, 5 B-757-200s

When negotiations started in May 2009, Piedmont pilots did not expect the process to be quick. However, they did expect management to fully participate in the discussions. But after months of negotiations, little has been accomplished at the bargaining table.

Piedmont

Piedmont Fires Back at Stonewalling Management

By Jen Lofquist, ALPA Communications Specialist



Piedmont operates 55 Dash 8s.

Working with other pilot groups in the US Airways family, Piedmont pilots started the negotiations process

with a collaborative mindset and invited other groups to join them at the negotiating table to strengthen their collective hands with their own management and with US Airways management. In contrast to the experience at PSA in which management did not object to other pilot group representatives attending, Piedmont management bluntly refused to participate in any meaningful negotiations with representatives of other pilot groups in the room. Instead, any overture from the Negotiating Committee was met with a terse "current book," or a demand for concessions.

"In negotiations, you expect not to agree on everything, but you do expect discussion," says Capt. Charles Martinak, the Piedmont pilot's Master Executive Council chairman. "Our negotiations team wasn't even given that."

With virtually no progress at the table after presenting all contract sections—and little hope of any in the future—Piedmont management opened the door to mediation more quickly than customary, and an application is now pending at the National Mediation Board (NMB). The pilots expect that the presence of an NMB mediator will force management's negotiators to recognize the contributions of the group and fully participate in the negotiating process.

The lack of progress at the bargaining table comes at a tumultuous time for the pilots—and for Piedmont Airlines. In August, US Airways announced plans to swap gates with Delta—effectively closing the US Airways Express La Guardia hub in favor of flying mainline flights out of Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport in Washington, D.C. This will close one of Piedmont's domiciles and eliminate jobs. The deal has not yet been approved by regulators but is expected to


take place early this year.

The group is also dealing with the uncertainty of being a wholly owned subsidiary of US Airways. Instead of answering to one management, it's common for Piedmont management to respond to pilot group inquiries with "We need to talk to Tempe [the headquarters of US Airways]." Right now, the future of Piedmont Airlines is far from clear. Many of the airline's Dash 8s are up for replacement, but management has made no plans to obtain new aircraft or even to reduce the fleet.

"We asked our management to elaborate on the future plans for the airline," says Martinak. "It simply couldn't give us a straight answer. We then turned to US Airways management, asking the same questions. We were told to ask our own management. Our pilot group has a vested interest in the future of this airline and needs to know where we are heading. I'm not sure if anyone knows the answer, but we're going to keep asking."

Unlike the pilots at many other regional carriers, pilots at Piedmont tend to be older with higher seniority status. Though the stereotypical regional pilot looks to move to mainline operations, many at Piedmont started with the company and expect to retire from it, making discussion about the future plans for Piedmont even more important. This older pilot group's priorities have an effect on negotiations, putting a much higher emphasis on retirement and health benefits than may be found at airlines with a younger pilot demographic.

Also in contrast to other regionals, Piedmont has a widely dispersed pilot group—with six domiciles across five states making communications even more vital to uniting the group. The MEC has responded with weekly e-mails, quarterly newsletters, and an active Communications Committee.

No matter how management responds to the pilots' application for mediation, the group is determined to be heard and will not accept current book as the end result of any negotiations. Despite the turmoil and uncertainty, one thing is clear: Piedmont pilots are unified in the pursuit of a fair contract. The only question is how long it will take management to realize that. 

PDT at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1952
Number of Pilots: 477
Headquarters: Salisbury, Md.
Pilot Domiciles: New Bern, N.C.; Charlottesville, Va.; Roanoke, Va.; New York, N.Y. (LGA); Harrisburg, Pa.; Salisbury, Md.
Fleet: 55 DHC-8s

The Pinnacle Airline pilots enter the New Year focused on one specific goal: attaining an industry-standard contract that recognizes Pinnacle Airlines as a career destination for airline pilots and *not* just a layover to a future with a major airline.

While an intensive round of negotiations in August 2009 netted a tentative agreement that included many contractual improvements, the majority of Pinnacle pilots agreed that the overall package simply did not meet the standards required to warrant a "yes" vote to ratify the agreement.

"Pinnacle pilots have identified sections of the tentative agreement that need to be modified to better reflect their current needs," says Capt. Scott Erickson, the Pinnacle pilots' Master Executive Council chairman. "We are prepared and we look forward to working with management to address these problem areas to achieve a successful ratification."

MEC leaders have developed a communications campaign that will launch in early 2010 to reenergize and reengage the Pinnacle pilots, who have endured a long and time-consuming negotiations process with amazing fortitude.

Pinnacle Airlines' pilots enter their fifth year of formal contract negotiations with a renewed sense of determination. The pilots hope that a new working agreement can be reached through the Section 6 negotiating process.


However, if further negotiations fail to yield an acceptable contract, the pilots stand united and willing to engage in all legal actions necessary to obtain a fair contract. The pilots demonstrated their unity and resolve in late 2007 when more than 99 percent of the 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 acceptable agreement and the National Mediation Board (NMB) releases both parties to economic self-help.

The Pinnacle pilots' contract became

amendable May 1, 2005. After a failed attempt at early negotiations in July 2004, formal contract negotiations began in February 2005. The NMB has been assisting both the pilots and management since September 2006. The pilots are the only Pinnacle employee group that has not had a pay raise in more than 5 years.

Pinnacle Airlines Corporation's purchase of Colgan Air highlighted the Pinnacle pilots' need to achieve stronger scope language to protect the airline piloting profession. The Pinnacle and Colgan MECs have developed a close working relationship and stand united toward the goal of achieving fair working agreements for all pilots in the service of Pinnacle Airlines Corporation.

Pinnacle Airlines operates a fleet of 142 Canadair CRJ200s and 900s throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central America under the Delta Connection brand from bases in Atlanta, Detroit, Memphis, and Minneapolis. The airline, a wholly owned subsidiary of Pinnacle Airlines Corporation, continues to be profitable despite higher fuel prices, challenging economic times, and major scheduling cutbacks.

Despite the slow economy and the arduous wait, Pinnacle pilots stand firm in their conviction that achieving a fair and equitable working agreement is of paramount importance. They have played a leading role in the success of Pinnacle Airlines and believe that a fair working agreement for all Pinnacle pilots will ultimately ensure the stability and success of the airline they have worked so hard to build. 

Pinnacle

Pinnacle Pilots Wait and See

By **Kimberly Seitz**, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



Pinnacle pilots enter their fifth year of formal contract negotiations with a renewed sense of determination.

PCL at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1988 (as Express Airlines before changing its name to Pinnacle in 2002)

Number of Pilots: 1,260

Operations: Pinnacle Airlines, Inc., operates more than 740 Delta Connection flights daily to 120 airports across the United States, Canada, Mexico, the Caribbean, and Central America

Pilot Domiciles: Atlanta, Ga.; Detroit, Mich.; Memphis, Tenn.; and Minneapolis, Minn.

Headquarters: Memphis, Tenn.

Fleet: 142 Canadair CRJ200s and 900s

PSA

Management Hears Pilots' Message

By David Fisher, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



With perseverance, patience, and a continued focus on unity, the PSA crewmembers may soon need to break out their sunglasses and window shades. Bright skies may be just ahead.

When airline pilots observe dark clouds on the horizon, they know it often means a bumpy ride lies ahead. For the pilots of PSA, the turbulent conditions are not always in the sky; sometimes the bumpy conditions are caused by a management that lost focus and cut expenses in the wrong places. Continued pressure to reduce costs led PSA management to improperly staff the airline, attempt to unfairly leverage the collective bargaining agreement in its favor, and generally reduce the quality of life for PSA crewmembers.

"PSA crewmembers have declared that it's time for a positive change in the management-pilot relationship," says Capt. Mark Stanley, the pilots' Master Executive Council chairman. During the past year, the PSA crewmembers have sent a crystal-clear message to

management that the pilots will no longer tolerate one-sided, management-imposed policies. Furthermore, they have firmly expressed that negotiated agreements are critical to realizing the full support and potential of their pilots if they desire to maintain a competitive edge.

The PSA MEC voiced its expectations for an improved relationship during the course of Section 6 negotiations, which began in June 2009. Much progress has been achieved during the past 6 months, and the PSA Negotiating Committee is optimistic that negotiations will continue to be productive.

Unity means more to PSA pilots than just achieving their negotiating agenda; it also calls for staying engaged with the pilots at their sister company, Piedmont. PSA pilots are determined to resist management's tactics of pitting the two groups against each other. They continue to coordinate and provide support to the Piedmont pilots, who are also in negotiations, as Section 6 bargaining continues at both carriers.

"As ALPA pilots, we will not compete

against each other on wages and work rules. We won't let management leverage us against each other and will continue to work toward a stable contractual environment where inter-airline competition is based on operational performance and managerial competency and not on disparate pay rates and work rules," says Stanley.

The commitment of the PSA MEC to coordinate with other pilot groups has garnered support from other pilots as well. From the very beginning of their preparations for Section 6 negotiations, the pilots of Air Wisconsin have provided invaluable advice and support.

Contract negotiations may consume a large portion of the time and energy expended by the PSA MEC, but it also pursues the day-to-day core work of the Association to maintain and improve the safety of its pilots. The MEC continues to work with management on a program to reduce pilot fatigue, rather than simply reducing the number of pilots by removing themselves from flight duty as a result of fatigue. Stanley is proud to have a dedicated cadre of capable volunteers to do this hard and unsung work.

"Our committee structure is quite robust and constantly in action on the issues of contract compliance, safety, training, scheduling, and paving the way for future growth and success in our industry. It's what we do. Without the quality, support, and dedication of our volunteers, we'd have a much harder time taking care of our pilot group," Stanley says.

With perseverance, patience, and a continued focus on unity, the PSA crewmembers may soon need to break out their sunglasses and window shades. Bright skies may be just ahead. ☺

PSA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1988 (PSA was previously called Jetstream. The airline changed its name to PSA in 1996.)

Number of Pilots: 400+ (55 on furlough)

Headquarters: Dayton, Ohio

Pilot Bases: Dayton, Ohio; Charlotte, N.C.; Knoxville, Tenn.

Airports Currently Served: 65 within the US Airways route network

Fleet: 35 CRJ200s, 14 CRJ700s

Ryan

Ryan International Airlines: Succeeding In Spite of Itself

By Rusty Ayers, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



Capt. Duane Muckey starts a descent into Spain.

RYN at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1998

Number of Pilots: 135 active (109 on furlough)

Pilot Domicile: Rockford, Ill. (RFD)

Headquarters: Rockford, Ill.

Services: Ryan International (not to be confused with Irish RyanAir) provides scheduled and charter services for customers around the world, including substantial flying for the U.S. Department of Defense

Fleet: 1 B-757 ETOPS, 2 B-767-300 non-ETOPS, 3 B-767-300ERS, 1 MD-80

At some airlines, management has found ways to work collaboratively with its flight crews, finding innovative methods to cut costs while honoring contract obligations. And then there are carriers like Ryan International Airlines, where pilots have to fight tooth and nail to make even small gains.

Pilots at Ryan say 2009 was one of their more challenging years yet regarding working conditions and general treatment. But they still were able to better their situation despite management fighting them every step of the way thanks to improvements built into their 2008 contract.

"In terms of pay and benefits, we've made significant progress toward digging out of the financial hole our previous contract put us in, because each subsequent year of our agreement gives us a larger step toward closing the gap," says Capt. Erik Sparks, the Master Executive Council chairman. "Unfortunately, we are also on pace for a record number of grievances and have participated in a number of arbitrations."

The pilot group has had a successful track record in defending both its contract and members facing unwarranted company discipline, with the biggest victory in 2009 coming when the union restored the jobs of two RYN pilots who were wrongfully terminated after a B-757 tail strike incident in Bolivia. An arbitration ruling in the captain's case overturned his termination, while management settled with the first officer shortly thereafter, rescinding his termination.

The MEC has settled a large number of other grievances that resulted in substantial gains for the pilot group, including monetary awards to several pilots who had been furloughed out of seniority. The group also signed a letter of agreement that instituted a straight 1 hour of pay for 2 hours of duty rig, something the pilots had fought for but had been unable to achieve in contract negotiations.

Despite these wins, Sparks says Ryan's compliance with the new contract seems to worsen as time progresses. Relations between the pilot group and CEO Mike McCabe are "nonexistent," even though McCabe promised at the start of 2009

to work with the union to change the airline's anti-labor corporate culture.

"There seems to be no end to the contract violations we face each week. In several cases, management is violating sections of the contract for which it had previously signed cease-and-desist letters, after facing prior grievances on that very section of the contract. Given the choice, management will violate the contract first, rather than approaching the union to deal with challenging situations that might arise," Sparks reports.

Based in Rockford, Ill., Ryan is wholly owned by commercial real estate company Rubloff Development Group. Because the airline is privately held, union leaders say it's difficult to track the company's finances, but they believe Ryan is making substantial profits that Rubloff has used to prop up its sagging real estate portfolio.

The airline's primary focus is flying troops and dependents worldwide for the U.S. Department of Defense, although its B-757/767 fleet is occasionally used for non-government charters. RYN's remaining MD-80, once part of a fleet that operated "Con Air" flights transporting federal prisoners, has now transitioned to ad hoc charter work after the company lost its contract with the U.S. Department of Justice.

Ryan International management has boosted its profits by understaffing the airline for much of 2009, keeping the carrier's many furloughed pilots in the unemployment line for far too long and undermining the quality of life for the pilots who remain working. But staffing is on an upward trend, with the airline recalling several dozen furloughed pilots and posting more vacancies in the coming weeks.

With Department of Defense flying projected to remain a stable source of income for the next few years, Ryan is expanding its fleet, with current plans calling for additional B-767-300ERs, with rumors of possibly adding a new type in 2010.

"If the company's recently stated expectations come to fruition, all of our furloughed pilots should be back at work this year," says Sparks. "We can only imagine how much stronger the airline could be if our management was willing to work with us." 🌐

Spirit

Spirit Continues Along Path Toward Possible Strike

By Jen Lofquist, ALPA Communications Specialist



The unity this group has demonstrated over the course of negotiations is built on an active communications program that includes biweekly updates, negotiation briefings, and monthly Strategic Preparedness and Strike Committee meetings.

SPA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1996
Number of Pilots: 519
Headquarters: Miramar, Fla.
Pilot Domiciles: Atlantic City, N.J.; Detroit, Mich.; Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.
Fleet: 27 A319s, 2 A321s

Spirit Airlines management has never been known for its reluctance to cause headlines, obviously buying into the motto, "There's no such thing as bad publicity." In one recent example, management drew news media attention when it produced a web ad in early December 2009 promoting an "Eye of the Tiger" fare sale—days after Tiger Woods crashed his vehicle in Florida and let loose a news media storm. The ad shows a tiger behind the wheel of an SUV that has crashed into a fire hydrant. Management demonstrates similar judgment and taste in its approach to labor relations—and it just might lead to the headline: "Spirit Pilots on Strike."

In November 2009, after more than 3 years of fits and starts in negotiations, numerous grievances, and a lawsuit, Spirit pilots asked the National Mediation Board (NMB) for a proffer of arbitration. The NMB's decision is expected in early 2010, and the pilots have been stepping up communications and events to prepare for the outcome.

The unity this group has demonstrated over the course of negotiations is built on an active communications program that includes biweekly updates, negotiation briefings, and monthly Strategic Preparedness and Strike Committee meetings in Detroit, Mich., Atlantic City, N.J., and Fort Lauderdale, Fla. In addition to the usual modes of communication, the pilots' Master Executive Council has also used Twitter (a site that uses short message service [SMS] to broadcast information), a public website, and text messaging to cell phones to get the word out.

Earlier, in May 2009, nearly 95 percent of the eligible pilots responded to a ballot to authorize the MEC to call for a lawful withdrawal of services if stalled negotiations do not result in a contract. Of the 95 percent who voted, 98 percent voted to support the MEC. Within weeks, the pilots plastered their crew bags with "98%" stickers—sending a clear message to management that they stood with their MEC and were prepared to strike.

"If this management put even half as much effort into trying to negotiate a fair agreement for its pilots as it did in developing crude advertising, we would have a new contract," commented Capt. Sean Creed, the pilots' MEC chairman, in

response to the vote. "This vote clearly shows that this pilot group is completely fed up with this approach and is now prepared to do whatever it takes to get the fair contract we deserve."

The vote came within months of management's most notorious proposal to date. In January 2009, after 2½ years of negotiations and ignoring 30 different tentative agreements reached in that time, Spirit management put forward a new contract proposal that asked for a staggering \$5.8 million in concessions. To add insult to injury, management's proposal came right after the airline announced plans to expand service in the Caribbean and the U.S.

Creed responded at the time, "Management has repeatedly asked the pilot group to fund its blunders and now wants us to finance its expansions. We want this company to succeed and grow, but not at the cost of our families and our careers."

While fighting for a new contract, the pilots have also been battling management's attempts to worm out of the current one. When the pilots negotiated the current contract, they gave up a number of key demands to retain the contractual protection of at least 4 days off between scheduled trips. Many Spirit pilots commute to bases in Fort Lauderdale and Detroit, and these days off give them time to recoup, rest, and spend time with their families.

However, in August 2008 management began scheduling pilots with as little as 2 days between trips to shore up staffing shortfalls. The pilots immediately filed a grievance. In March 2009, an arbitration panel found in favor of the pilot group and ordered Spirit management to abide by the agreement. After 9 months, the pilots were finally given back what never should have been taken from them in the first place.

Despite the full-court press from the pilot group, management continues to drag its feet at the negotiating table, seemingly hoping that the pilots are bluffing. But these pilots show no signs of backing down from their demands for a contract that reflects and rewards their contributions to the airline.

In fact, the pilots seem more than ready to make some headlines of their own. 🦁

When airline passengers think of “hometown” airlines, several obvious names come to mind: Chicago is synonymous with United Airlines, Seattle with Alaska, Honolulu with Hawaiian. But which airline is now the hometown carrier for Minneapolis? The answer is Sun Country Airlines.

Sun Country

Minneapolis’ Hometown Airline

By Rusty Ayers, ALPA Senior Communication Specialist



Sun Country’s Capt. Ross Johnson and F/O Mark Wolter in the cockpit.

With Northwest Airlines completing its merger with Delta, Sun Country is now the only transcontinental carrier based in Minnesota, flying to the east and west coasts as well as Mexico and the Caribbean from its home base in MSP.

Sun Country’s fate could not have been more uncertain a year ago. The airline’s former owner, Tom Petters, had been arrested and charged with orchestrating a massive Ponzi scheme that duped billions of dollars from investors. Faced with a cash crunch and a great deal of uncertainty about its ownership situation, Sun Country declared bankruptcy and briefly imposed 50 percent pay cuts on all employees.

Since then, Petters has been convicted of fraud and will no longer be involved with the airline. SCA management is repaying employees with interest for the temporary pay cuts, and the airline is profitable.

“We hope to see the company come out of bankruptcy in the first part of 2010,” says Capt. Buddy Scroggins, the pilots’ Master Executive Council chairman. “Our airline continues to enjoy a great deal of brand loyalty in our hometown market as well as in our regular scheduled service destinations. Of course, Minneapolis/St. Paul is a large market and competition will always exist, but we remain *the* hometown airline and continue to rely upon our superior service to maintain our customer loyalty.”

Though SCA once was known as a winter airline that flew icebound Midwesterners to sunny beaches, new CEO Stan Gadek has promised to diversify the carrier and strengthen its revenue base. A major goal is to make the airline profitable year-round, not just during the busy winter vacation season.

“During the last year and a half,

the airline has trimmed excesses on the expense side and has expanded its focus on ad hoc charter flying while still preserving the healthier parts of our existing business,” Scroggins says. “The company is also just completing development of an ETOPS program that will enable the airline to extend its route structure and offer services to more distant destinations.”

But things haven’t been easy. Last year management proposed sweeping concessions that would have essentially gutted meaningful elements of the Sun Country pilots’ contract. While those changes were not implemented, the pilots have worked successfully with management to provide appropriate relief when sensible and necessary.

As Sun Country enters 2010 stronger both financially and operationally, it still remains to be seen who will own the operation in the coming year. While news media outlets are reporting the existence of potential buyers for the carrier, the current management is prepared to take the airline out of bankruptcy as a stand-alone airline.

Scroggins says the Sun Country pilots remain focused on helping their airline to grow, controlling rumors, and preparing for upcoming contract negotiations.

“Although there have been a number of rumors about potential buyers, we have no solid information about any deals. We don’t know of a single corner of the airline industry that isn’t under stress at this time, but the climate at Sun Country, including the pilots, remains upbeat and generally optimistic,” he reports. ☺

SCA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1995

Contract Amendable: 2010

Number of Pilots: 125 (32 on furlough)

Services: Based in Mendota Heights, Minn., Sun Country flies to 33 destinations throughout the Caribbean, the United States, and Mexico. Of these destinations, eight cities are served year-round. Known primarily as a vacation getaway airline, Sun Country is expanding its charter business.

Fleet: 9 B-737-700s and -800s, with additional -800s leased during the winter flying season

It's been a turbulent year for Trans States pilots with enough ups and downs to cause even the hardest flyer some airsickness. And an even bumpier ride is projected for 2010.

To sum it up: During 2008 and 2009, Trans States lost all its American codeshare flying, which resulted in the removal of

10 aircraft and the furlough of dozens

Despite another union official's wrongful termination in July and a substantial increase in suspensions since the end of last year, ALPA has successfully settled numerous outstanding grievances, including those associated with training pay, vacation accrual, health insurance, temporary duty assignments, away-from-domicile reserve assignments, and ASAP.

It's evident that despite the pitfalls, TSA pilots continue to forge ahead and stay active in union activities. Pilot leaders have played a key role in ALPA's Fee-For-Departure Task Force, attending quarterly United Codeshare Committee meetings, helping develop a FOQA program at TSA, and creating a Safety Review Subcommittee under the Central Air Safety Committee to address operational concerns with management.

The MEC also initiated an educational campaign this past summer that has included informing pilots of the TSA/GoJet issue; a Strategic Preparedness and Strike Committee (SPSC) "Night Out" program designed to encourage pilots to meet with their MEC, negotiators, and SPSC leaders; conducting all-pilot conference calls; and publishing the *Negotiating News*. The MEC also met in Memphis, Tenn., to develop and pass a job preservation mission statement to address the potential threat of losing flying to GoJet and/or other United Express carriers.

On Nov. 17, 2009, the TSA MEC met with the National Mediation Board to discuss management's failure to negotiate in good faith and the pilots' frustration at failing to reach an agreement after nearly 4 years of negotiating. On December 2, ALPA requested a proffer of arbitration in the hopes of motivating management to reach an agreement.

"The pilots hope that this request for a proffer will introduce new energy at the negotiating table, which will ultimately result in a new labor agreement," says Ruszin.

As a result of that request, the TSA SPSC is gearing up for any eventualities and is in the final stages of developing a strike action plan.

"We're optimistic that 2010 will bring major advancement—either at the table or on the picket line," Ruszin concludes. ☺

Trans States

TSA Pilots Weather the Storm of 2009

By Kimberly Seitz, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



The pilots and management have not reached tentative agreement on any open sections of the contract since May 2008. The battle between TSA pilots and management to negotiate a new contract has been ongoing since February 2006, and many sections remain open.

of pilots. Curiously, Trans States Holdings (TSH) then announced in October 2009 a letter of intent to purchase 100 Mitsubishi aircraft for delivery in 2014. Whether TSA pilots will fly any of those aircraft remains to be seen as the aircraft could also be placed at TSH's additional wholly owned carrier, GoJet Airlines. And, unfortunately, TSA pilots continue to be furloughed. To date, because of a reduction in fleet from 52 aircraft to 30, 145 TSA pilots are on furlough.

It doesn't end there. The pilots and management have not reached tentative agreements on any open sections of the contract since May 2008. The battle between TSA pilots and management to negotiate a new contract has been ongoing since February 2006, and many sections remain open.

"I believe our Negotiating Committee, as well as the Master Executive Council, has been very clear about wanting an industry-average contract with satisfactory job protections for Trans States pilots. Unfortunately, making progress to that end has been arduous and overly time-consuming," says Capt. Jason Ruszin, the MEC chairman.

During contract negotiations in March 2009, management offered a substandard, short-term "bridge" agreement that would have postponed negotiations for 18 months. The MEC rejected management's offer as it lacked any elements of job protection and did not implement any of the tentatively agreed-to sections of the contract. Tired of management's reticence to come to the table and participate in meaningful dialogue, the MEC conducted a strike authorization vote. Eighty-two percent of the eligible TSA pilots voted, and 95 percent voted to authorize a legal cessation of services in the event an impasse is reached.

TSA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1993
Signed First ALPA Contract: 1994
Number of Pilots: 445
Operations: More than 300 daily flights to 46 cities, serving more than 3.4 million passengers annually while flying as United Express and US Airways
Pilot Domiciles: St. Louis, Mo.; Richmond, Va.; Washington Dulles
Headquarters: St. Louis, Mo.
Fleet: 30 EMB-145s

United

United Pilots Are Poised and Determined to Move Forward

By C. David Kelly, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



PHOTO BY WILLIAM A. RORD

"We are clearly at the most critical turning point for our individual and collective futures. United pilots demand an end to our inadequate and substandard contract, a contract that fails to recognize the true value of our contributions to our company."

—Capt. Wendy Morse, UAL MEC chairman

UAL at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1932

Number of Pilots: 7,800 (1,437 on furlough)

Headquarters: Chicago, Ill.

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

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

The pilots of United Airlines stand at the threshold of a new beginning. On Dec. 31, 2009, the collective bargaining agreement between the pilots and United Airlines became amendable. It was a date that represented a psychological turning point; a date that, finally, enabled United pilots to focus their attention toward a better tomorrow.

"The United pilots stand poised and determined to move forward as the pendulum now swings in our favor," says Capt. Wendy Morse, the pilots' Master Executive Council chairman. "This pilot group is solidified and ready for improvements to wages and working conditions as we proceed down the Section 6 airway.

"We are clearly at the most critical turning point for our individual and collective futures. United pilots demand an end to our inadequate and substandard contract, a contract that fails to recognize the true value of our contributions to our company."

The pilots began Section 6 negotiations 270 days before the amendable date. They requested mediation early and long before impasse and are now negotiating under the supervision of the National Mediation Board. During the time leading up to Section 6 negotiations, the United pilots spun up fully charged Strike Preparedness and Family Awareness Committees, which are at the ready to further the charge of an industry-leading contract.

As former chairman of the MEC Negotiating Committee, Morse recognizes that as Section 6 negotiations move forward beyond the amendable date, gains must be made that improve pilots' quality of life and working conditions even before reaching a final agreement.

"Any improvement in the pilots' quality of life is a step in the right direction and a change from the environment that we have endured for entirely too long," she declares.

While working to secure an industry-leading contract, the United MEC also must focus on the potential for industry consolidation. If the potential for a merger involving United exists, the United MEC stands ready to defend its pilots' best interests.

"Consolidation is a business solution

that the United pilots are neither afraid of nor opposed to in principle," explains Morse. For decades the United MEC has had a Merger Committee for the purpose of protecting United pilots' interests in the event of a merger. "We are willing to embrace a consolidation remedy if it is viable and appropriately recognizes the intrinsic values that pilots contribute to our airline," she adds. "The United MEC believes that for consolidation to work, United must find the right partner that will produce the correct synergies allowing it to compete effectively in an ever changing airline industry. United must avoid settling for just any dance partner with which to merge."

While unable to predict the future,

"It is only through labor and painful effort, by grim energy and resolute courage, that we move on to better things."

—Theodore Roosevelt

Morse is certain of one fact. The United pilots, including the 1,437 on furlough, have more than paid their dues throughout United's economic struggles. She, along with the pilots of United, believe the time has come for United's management to, at long last, recognize the contributions this pilot group has made and continues to make toward the success of United Airlines.

"The United pilot group, in its entirety, is completely unified in the belief that improvements to our wages and working conditions are long overdue," says Morse. "The history of United pilots is one of bold and decisive leadership, of visionary command that has enhanced every facet of aviation. Ours is a legacy to be proud of, an epic story of leadership in the industry and in the profession.

"Our legacy alone, however, will not ensure our future. Our collective strength, defined strategies, measurable progress, and coalescing of unity will be the true measures of our stature as we move forward. We are righteous in our quest, and we must hold ourselves to the highest ideals of professionalism and unionism." 🌐

Despite signing an Essential Services Agreement that prohibits a strike or lockout if or when negotiations fail, the Wasaya pilots continue to aggressively pursue their first contract with a management team that has been less than cooperative. To support the pilots' valiant struggle in the face of such adversity, the ALPA Executive Council awarded the Wasaya pilots a \$250,000 grant from the Association's Major Contingency Fund (MCF).

The grant was announced at a pilot briefing that Wasaya pilots; Master Executive Council representatives; and Canada Board president, Capt. Dan Adamus (Air Canada Jazz), and vice-president, Capt. Nick DiCintio (Air Canada Jazz) attended in Thunder Bay, Ont., in early December 2009. ALPA's president, Capt. John Prater, who was unable

to attend the briefing, confirmed the grant via teleconference from the White House. Prater was representing the Association at a summit on creating jobs in the U.S.

The award from ALPA's war chest, which will go before the Executive Board for approval, will support continuing strategic activities now that the Wasaya collective bargaining process has reached an impasse.

"Our highly experienced negotiating team has been laboring for more than 18 months to achieve a fair and equitable contract," says Capt. Jeff Braun, the pilots' MEC chairman. "And ALPA's additional financial support puts us in the strongest possible position to achieve the outcome we seek—a viable, profitable, and sustainable airline."

Pursuant to the Canada Labour Code, which governs negotiations in Canada, the Maintenance of Activities and Dispute Resolution Agreement, or the aforementioned Essential Services Agreement, that the pilots and management approved concludes that the cessation of flying, in whole or in part during the course of a strike or lockout, has the potential to cause an immediate and serious danger to the safety and health of the public.


Because Wasaya provides the majority of charter, cargo and scheduled passenger service to 25 First Nation communities in remote areas of northwestern Ontario—many of which are only accessible via air—Wasaya pilot jobs are considered essential positions.

Wasaya pilots deliver most, if not all, necessities, including fuel, food, and medicine to these remote communities of 400–2,500 residents. With roads scarce, most winter travel in the region is by snowmobiles, flown in on Wasaya airplanes. Much of the pilots' flying is in temperatures well below freezing, landing on short gravel and, many times, icy runways.

After 18 months of negotiating with limited success, the Wasaya pilots applied for the appointment of a conciliation officer from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services (FMCS) on December 3, pursuant to the Maintenance of Activities and Dispute Resolution Agreement. On December 12, the FMCS appointed the regional director of the Ontario region of FMCS as the conciliation officer assigned to Wasaya. Conciliation dates are confirmed for January and February 2010.

In other news, the pilots are vehemently opposed to management's flawed use of data gathered from the Safety Management System (SMS) program. Though Canada is a leader in its adoption of SMS in its marine, rail, and aviation industries as a means to improve safety, Wasaya management uses it for a different purpose: disciplinary action.

"If a pilot files a report, management figures he or she must have done something wrong, and therefore, he or she must be disciplined," says Braun. "To think that a program designed to enhance the safety culture at an airline is now being used to discipline the very pilots who understand the system and want to use it to improve the airline is patently absurd."

The Wasaya MEC has directed ALPA staff to take these disciplinary acts to arbitration for resolution. 

Wasaya

Pilots Forge Ahead Despite Stalled Negotiations

By Kimberly Seitz, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



Wasaya is headquartered in Thunder Bay, Ont., Canada. The pilots fly 24 aircraft including the Beech 1900D shown above.

WSG at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2008

Number of Pilots: 90

Operations: Charter, cargo, and scheduled passenger services to 25 First Nation communities in northwestern Ontario and Timmins, Ont.

Pilot Domiciles: Red Lake, Ont.; Sioux Lookout, Ont.; Timmins, Ont.; Thunder Bay, Ont.; and Winnipeg, Man.

Headquarters: Wholly owned by a First Nations consortium and based in Thunder Bay, Ont.

Fleet: 24 aircraft, including Beech 1900Ds, Caravan C-208Bs, Hawker Siddeley HS748s, and Pilatus PC-12s