Airline Career Pilot Program

ATP is your fast track airline career solution from zero time to airline pilot – proven by thousands of graduates now flying for regional and major airlines.

- Certification through Private, Commercial, and CFI (Multi, Single, Instrument)
- Fast track, fixed cost, airline-oriented training from day one
- Start with zero time and reach airline minimums in about 2 years with guaranteed CFI job

$69,995 9 Month FAST TRACK  Housing Option Available  ✔ Full Financing Available

ATP CTP

- Dallas, TX
- Classes start every Monday, Wednesday, & Friday
- Add $200 for ATM Knowledge Prep & Test

$4,895 / 7 Days  ✔ Airline Discounts Available  📚 GI Bill Accepted

Aircraft Dispatcher

- 200 hour initial course in Dallas, TX
- All books & training material included
- ADX test prep software & exam included

$4,995 / 6 Weeks  ✔ Financing Available

Call or text (872) 215-2877

ATPFlightSchool.com

All prices offered through February 28, 2018. Check ATPFlightSchool.com for details and eligibility requirements.
COMMENTARY

5 OUR UNION
Pilots Lay It on the Line

6 PILOT COMMENTARY
Our Third Decade of Moving Canadian Aviation Forward

FEATURES

17 2018 PILOTS OF ALPA

52 PREPARING YOUR 2017 TAXES

55 THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT FOR ALPA CANADA MEMBERS

DEPARTMENTS

7 PREFLIGHT

56 ALPA@WORK
Adapting to Change to Enhance Negotiations Support; ‘Made in Canada’

59 OUR STORIES
JetBlue Pilot Communicates Via Smoke Signals

60 RECENTLY RETIRED
See Who’s on the List

61 THE LANDING
ALPA Pilot Groups’ New Year’s Resolutions

62 WE ARE ALPA
ALPA Resources and Contact Numbers

ABOUT THE COVER
The many lanyards from various ALPA pilot groups highlight this issue’s “2018 Pilots of ALPA.” Cover photo by Chris Weaver.


Canadian Publications Mail Agreement #40620579

Postmaster: Send address changes to Air Line Pilot, 535 Herndon Parkway, Herndon, VA 20170.

Canadian Publications Mail Agreement #40620579

Canada Post: Return undeliverables to P.O. Box 2601, 6915 Dixie Rd, Mississauga, ON L4T 0A9.
This is the only aisle we care about.

ALPA-PAC is the most bipartisan labor PAC in the country. Conservative, liberal, or somewhere in between: we don’t care what side of the aisle they’re on, as long as they’re on our side.

Back the PAC!

www.ALPAPAC.org

Disclaimer: The descriptions of the Air Line Pilots Association PAC are not a solicitation to contribute to the PAC. Only ALPA members, ALPA executives, senior administrative and professional staff personnel, and their immediate family members living in the same household are eligible to contribute to ALPA-PAC. ALPA-PAC maintains and enforces a policy of refusing to accept contributions from any other source. ALPA members may learn more about ALPA-PAC and about contributing to ALPA-PAC by entering the members-only portion of www.alpa.org.
Pilots Lay It on the Line

“...believe most things can be said in a few lines,” said Enzo Ferrari, historic designer, builder, and racer of epic sports cars. Even though he was born 120 years ago, Ferrari’s words prove prescient now. Creating a profile online or in print forces us to distill into just a few words who we are and what we hold most important.

At ALPA, our members determine the words in our union’s profile. Based on our pilots’ strategic plan, our members embody the portrait of our union with adjectives such as “professional,” “fully qualified,” and “well trained,” and roles such as “safety advocate,” “seasoned negotiator,” and “union leader.”

In this issue of Air Line Pilot, each ALPA pilot group profile presents the achievements made possible by our members (see page 17). Last year, airline company profits were strong, creating a positive bargaining environment at many carriers that we expect to continue. Individual pilot group leaders develop independent bargaining goals for their members, but every pilot group’s profile shows how they’re supported by ALPA’s collective resources.

We begin 2018 with a remarkable record in contract negotiations. ALPA pilots at Hawaiian Airlines, Mesa Airlines, and Endeavor Air all signed new agreements with significant gains. We also see promising developments for Spirit pilots. In addition, many ALPA pilot groups have also made encouraging headway apart from the formal bargaining process, including CommutAir, Delta Air Lines, Expressjet, FedEx Express, United Airlines, and Wasaya Airways.

Pilots who are not yet members of ALPA are noticing our collective accomplishment and becoming part of our movement. Air Georgian, Encore, and WestJet pilots joined our ranks last year, and we expect to welcome more airline pilots to ALPA this year.

Our members’ respected profile as safety advocates means we’ll never fail to take a firm line against any effort to change the FAA’s first officer qualification and training requirements. Our “Trained for Life” public-awareness campaign has reinforced ALPA pilots’ support for these life-saving rules, which have played an essential role in preventing even a single airline passenger fatality on a U.S. commercial aircraft since 2010.

By driving an effort that sent more than 40,000 letters and e-mails to Congress in 2017, our union defended these critical safety regulations against special-interest groups—but we know that this fight is far from over. This year, the Trained for Life campaign will remind still more passengers, cargo shippers, and industry influencers of airline pilots’ commitment to lifelong training.

While our union’s dedication to safety is beyond question, so is our decades-long pledge to inspire the next generation of aviators. ALPA pilots are fully committed to doing what it takes to keep the pilot pipeline strong and our skies safe. We know that an essential part of the equation for a strong, qualified pilot workforce in the future is airlines’ offering competitive pay, benefits, career progression, and work-life balance.

In 2017, we engaged with aviation students at five new colleges and universities (see page 14). ALPA’s Education Committee made certain ALPA had a solid presence at events such as AirVenture Oshkosh, the Organization of Black Aerospace Professionals Annual Convention and Career Expo, and the International Women in Aviation Conference. We also connected with more than 12,000 grade school and more than 1,300 college students. This year, our plans will build on this success to reach new audiences, including promoting cleartodream.org and our industry coalition website, aviationworks4u.org.

These and many other accomplishments result from ALPA members’ proud and consistent profile in the halls of Congress and Parliament, in the offices of regulators, at the bargaining table, and in classrooms. Whether it’s during a PA announcement on our last leg of a trip, on a lanyard worn over our uniform while informational picketing, or in a tweet to lawmakers supporting #TrainedforLife, ALPA members lay it on the line to achieve our collective goals.

Capt. Tim Canoll, ALPA President
Our Third Decade of Moving Canadian Aviation Forward

By Capt. Dan Adamus (Jazz Aviation), ALPA Canada President

It’s been 21 years since the inception of ALPA’s Canada Board; and for more than half that time, I’ve had the privilege of serving as ALPA Canada president. Looking back, we’ve much to be proud of. In fact, I’d say my expectations have been exceeded. Yet I say this with some caveats.

Shortly after the Canadian Airline Pilots Association (CALPA) merged with ALPA in 1997, I was optimistic that ALPA could bring all the Canadian pilot groups together within the first few years. Unfortunately, this wasn’t the case. During the early 2000s, Canadian pilot groups grew further apart, and I feared we’d never achieve pilot unity in Canada.

But we’re getting there!

And we’re doing it by continuing to do what ALPA does best:

- Negotiating good, progressive contracts for pilot groups.
- Advancing airline safety and security.
- Advocating for airline pilots on issues that affect our profession, our industry, and our livelihoods.
- Providing our members with the resources they need to deal with industry stakeholders, government officials, and the public.

We also opened up conversations about common goals and respect in the pilot community. For too long, pilot groups have worked for individual causes, which impeded our ability in Canada to work collaboratively. These conversations, which focus on our profession, must continue and turn into something tangible, for the benefit of everyone.

In 2002, ALPA represented 1,500 pilots and five pilot groups in Canada. However, over the past few years, more and more pilot groups decided they wanted to become a part of ALPA. Today, the number of pilots has more than tripled to 5,000, while our pilot groups have increased to 11. Why? Because ALPA is the preeminent pilots’ union in the world, having a top-notch staff and unmatched resources. And without sounding overconfident, I’m hopeful that 2018 will bring us even more members.

Regarding the work we do, our evolution over the past two decades has set us apart. We’re well respected and recognized for our efforts with various stakeholders, including Members of Parliament and government regulators. We’ve worked strategically to cultivate these relationships, and over the years people have taken notice. We understand that good relationships can open the door only so far, but having a solid network of industry associates is essential to achieving our goals.

Without initial access, we wouldn’t have the ability or opportunity to effect positive change. And to achieve this change, ALPA understands the need to be meticulous. Before we draft white papers and testimony, before we give presentations, and before we go to the news media, we research and analyze each and every issue. We’re consistent in our messaging and in our mandate. This consistency is key to ALPA’s credibility. People take notice, and it’s made them want to become a member of ALPA’s family—a family that provides many advantages. These advantages exist in large part due to the tremendous support we receive from our ALPA family union wide on issues that are unique to Canada.

Of these issues, we’ve kept our focus on flight- and duty-time regulations and will continue our efforts throughout 2018. It’s been a long road so far, and we’ve played a major role in ensuring that we hold the government accountable on this critical issue.

We’re also proud of the changes made to the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Due in large measure to ALPA’s staunch advocacy efforts, Parliament mandated that Canadian carriers are no longer able to staff seasonal variations in fleet capacity with foreign pilots when unemployed Canadian pilots are available. We effected positive change that ensures Canadian pilots have first dibs on Canadian jobs, which is exactly what we asked for.

Heading into 2018, more work needs to be done, and we can’t do it by ourselves. It takes a team of dedicated volunteers and staff. This ALPA team—which sets our union apart—continues to do an amazing job, working every day to enhance our profession and our industry. I’m honored to be a member of ALPA’s team.
DOMESTIC NEWS

Michael Huerta, the FAA administrator who oversaw the safest period in the history of commercial flight in the United States, left the position on January 6. As this issue went to press, the White House had not yet named his permanent replacement.

The FAA announced that through September 2017, it received 1,688 reports of drones flying in restricted airspace, compared to 1,754 reports for all of 2016.

Per the Department of Transportation, U.S. airlines collected a record $1.2 billion in baggage fees between July and September 2017, up approximately 10 percent from the same period last year.

The Los Angeles Times reported that a computer glitch that gave too many American Airlines pilots approval to take vacation during the Christmas travel season is expected to cost the airline about $10 million in additional pay to pilots who offered to work during their vacations.

According to The Washington Post, American, Delta, and Alaska have announced that effective January 15, travelers were no longer permitted to check smart bags unless their batteries were removed. The airlines still allow travelers to bring the bags as carry-ons as long as the batteries are powered down in accordance with FAA regulations.

Spirit Airlines announced that Chief Executive Officer Robert Fornaro will be stepping down from the position at the end of the year. Current Chief Financial Officer Ted Christie will take over the position on Jan. 1, 2019.

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

WestJet announced that it plans to introduce budget carrier Swoop later this year (see page 51). The airline is designed to appeal to travelers looking for rock-bottom fares. Swoop flights will offer 189 seats, 21 more than what WestJet currently offers on flights. Swoop will initially fly six B-737-800s with plans to expand to 10 airplanes in its first year of operation.

According to The Telegraph, a proposed regulation in the UK would subject airports and airlines a fine of up to a 50,000 pounds (approximately US$68,000) if they direct arriving international passengers the wrong way, allowing passengers to bypass border control.

Per Reuters, British Airways’ owner IAG announced that it’s purchasing Niki, Air Berlin’s bankrupt Austrian holiday airline, for 20 million euros (18 million pounds or approximately US$24 million) and provide additional liquidity to the company of up to 16.5 million euros (approximately US$20 million).

The Irish Independent reported that Ryanair executives and members of trade union Forsea have been meeting to work out a historic negotiating framework that will later lead to talks on pilot pay and working conditions.

ALPA Supports UAS ARC Recommendations

“ALPA supports the recommendations of the Unmanned Aircraft Systems [UAS] Identification and Tracking Aviation Rulemaking Committee [ARC], and we encourage the FAA to implement mandatory identification and tracking capabilities as quickly as possible,” commented ALPA in late December regarding the UAS ARC report that calls for UAS operators to equip their devices with identification and tracking systems, law enforcement officials gain the ability to identify and track down a UAS pilot who may be involved in a collision or is jeopardizing the safety of our national airspace or the general public.

“In September, a collision between an army helicopter and a drone highlighted the importance of implementing this technology. In that event, pieces of the drone were used to identify the registered owner through the drone’s manufacturer. While fortunate in that instance, we cannot rely on good fortune in the future. Identification and tracking technologies are needed urgently. With the rapidly growing use of UAS, it’s more important than ever that we remain focused on safety as the highest priority,” ALPA concluded.

Trump Administration Takes Action on Open Skies

In mid-December, the Trump administration announced that it was taking preliminary action to address the massive subsidies that Qatar and the United Arab Emirates pour into their state-run airlines, which leads to capacity dumping and a distortion of the international aviation marketplace and is in clear violation of U.S. Open Skies agreements.

“These subsidies kill American jobs, undermine the global aviation market, and leave the United States at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to fair and open competition,” said ALPA. The Association believes that the action taken by the Trump administration is a positive development and should lead to the full enforcement of U.S. Open Skies trade agreements, which
will bring an end to unfair trade practices that have hurt the U.S. economy and American workers.

**ALPA Lauds Restoration of UAS Registration in 2018 Defense Bill**

“ALPA applauds Congress and the president for restoring the FAA’s ability to require that owners and operators of unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) register their vehicles,” commented the Association in mid-December after President Donald Trump formally signed the National Defense Authorization Act for 2018 into law. “This is an important tool that helps ensure that UAS are flown safely in skies they share with airliners carrying passengers and cargo.

“ALPA has been a strong advocate for UAS operator registration to help law enforcement authorities ensure compliance with regulations and enable the FAA to educate individuals who may be new to aviation about the responsibility that comes with flying a UAS in shared airspace.

“Before the U.S. Court of Appeals overturned the FAA’s successful registration process earlier this year, more than 800,000 operators had registered their devices,” ALPA said. “Maintaining safety must stand as the first priority as we integrate UAS into shared airspace. ALPA looks forward to working with the FAA and industry on evolving this process even further to a point-of-sale registration requirement, which would make certain that UAS owners and operators are aware of the rules and responsibility involved with the aircraft they purchase.”

**ALPA Praises DOT Forces To Flyers Initiative**

“We applaud the Department of Transportation and Secretary Elaine Chao’s commitment to making it easier for our veterans to work in the best industry in the world,” said Capt. Tim Canoll, ALPA’s president, regarding the recent announcement of the Forces to Flyers program aimed at increasing career opportunities for veterans who want to become airline pilots. “Many of ALPA’s members have proudly served our country in uniform, and the union stands ready to assist others in breaking down barriers that may impede them from pursuing careers in aviation, all while maintaining the highest levels of safety.

“No one is more committed to ensuring we have enough qualified and experienced pilots than the Air Line Pilots Association, International. The good news is that we currently have more fully qualified pilots in the United States than there are positions available, and air travel is the safest mode of transportation in the world due to our commitment to schedule with safety,” noted Canoll.

**Taking Off**

**Days to Remember**

As I write this column, we’ve just recognized the ninth anniversary of the legendary “Miracle on the Hudson,” when on Jan. 15, 2009, Capt. Chesley “Sully” Sullenberger and First Officer Jeffrey Skiles landed US Airways Flight 1549 in the middle of New York City’s Hudson River. Thanks to their training and experience, they safely guided and landed their unpowered aircraft and saved the lives of 155 passengers and crew on board.

This globally famous story became another example of ALPA’s long-held assertion that the best and most important safety feature on any airplane are two well-trained and highly skilled pilots.

Sadly, we also approach another anniversary—the fatal crash of Colgan Air Flight 3407 on Feb. 12, 2009. On that day, we lost fellow crewmembers, family, and friends. But from this tragedy we gained the support of Congress, which enacted tougher airline pilot training and experience requirements to keep our skies safe. ALPA pilots and staff, along with the Association’s allies, worked swiftly and tirelessly to make significant improvements for all passengers and crew.

And the safety record stands on its own. Since the law was enacted in 2010, there has not been a single U.S. airline passenger fatality. This unparalleled safety record was even recently acknowledged by U.S. President Donald Trump.

ALPA pilots and staff are back at it again, working around the clock to thwart the efforts of some profit-based special-interest groups in Washington, D.C., that are shamelessly trying to weaken these rules and make our skies less safe. ALPA members stand together with nearly 100,000 airline pilots who are actively opposing legislation to degrade aviation safety rules, and some 40,000 letters were sent to Congress last year to stop the special interests from weakening these critical safety regulations.

The combination of these two anniversaries is distinctly powerful. One demonstrated what a well-trained, highly skilled crew is capable of during the unthinkable, and the other was a deafening cry for change. With 31 million flights per year and 2.5 million passengers a day—there are too many lives at risk to take chances. As the chief defenders of the piloting profession in the U.S. and Canada, you know the repercussions of weaker standards, training, and experience, and you’ve actively engaged on this front. And your work has made a difference. We’re winning on the legislative front, and we’re having an impact with our “Trained for Life” public-awareness campaign. The entire ALPA team is committed to success in this cause. We’ll never ease up on our commitment to keep our skies safe.

Lori Garver, General Manager

Lori.Garver@alpa.org
“However, as we work to ensure that we have a healthy supply of pilots, we should not weaken pilot-qualification requirements and make our skies less safe. We can address pilot-supply issues without weakening air safety rules and jeopardizing the flying public.

“ALPA continues to oppose the Thune Amendment, which would reduce the level of safety in our industry and was included in the Senate Commerce Committee’s version of the FAA’s reauthorization bill, and we will strongly oppose any regulatory proposal that emerges with the same intent, including a provision of the recently released Air Carrier Training Aviation Rulemaking Committee’s recommendation.”

ALPA to Be Honored with Laureate Award
Aviation Week recently announced the 2018 winners of its annual Laureate Awards, and ALPA is one of the honorees. In the category of Commercial Aviation Safety, the top award went to the combined efforts of the Commercial Aviation Safety Team (CAST) and the Aviation Safety Information Analysis and Sharing (ASIAS) initiative. ALPA was a founding member of both CAST and ASIAS and actively participate on their leadership teams as well as working groups.

According to Aviation Week, the FAA and industry organizations involved in these efforts have provided “an unparalleled collaboration between government and industry to improve aviation safety. Having exceeded its first 10-year goal and reduced U.S. commercial aviation fatality risk by 83 percent, CAST now aims to reduce the remaining risk 50 percent by 2025, leveraging industry data and analytical tools from ASIAS.”

“The pilots of ALPA are proud to have been engaged in advancing safety on both CAST and ASIAS. Safety is paramount to every pilot,” said Capt. Steve Jangelis (Delta), ALPA’s Air Safety Organization Aviation Safety chairman. “The contributions of CAST and ASIAS have improved aviation safety through proactive analytical practices and provide extraordinary benefit to each of our crewmembers every day.”

The award will be presented March 1 at the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C.

ALPA Begins Beta Phase of Pilot Records Database
In early December, the FAA began the beta phase of its new pilot records database (PRD), which was required by Congress in the Airline Safety and Federal Aviation Administration Extension Act of 2010 (P.L. 111–216). The beta phase will provide air carriers an opportunity to automate the current requirements contained in the Pilot Records Improvement Act of 1996 (PRIA) requirements, and this phase will only include FAA records from 2010 forward.

The new automated system is voluntary for air carriers and for prospective pilot applicants. The prospective pilot applicant has to grant the air carrier access to view his or her pilot records. If the prospective applicant decides to deny access, the airline will go through the normal PRIA process.

Any FAA-certificated pilot will be able to view his or her own records if the pilot’s identity has been electronically verified. During the PRD beta phase, the FAA asks pilots not to attempt to access the PRD unless instructed to do so by a participating air carrier. Pilots are able to grant participating air carriers access to their records through the PRD portal.

If a pilot discovers incorrect information in the pilot records database, contact ALPA’s Engineering & Air Safety Department at 1-800-424-2470 or EAS@alpa.org for assistance in working with the FAA to correct the record.

Give Your Teen a Summer To Remember
Do you want your teen to travel abroad, learn about a new culture, further his or her foreign language skills, and have the experience of a lifetime?

The International Youth Exchange (IYE) program offers a two-week exchange program for airline families. Using their family flight privileges, teens aged 14 to 19 are matched with a youth in another part of the world and spend two weeks in each other’s homes, usually over summer break.

IYE has been creating international exchanges for 23 years, successfully matching more than 6,000 teens around the globe. IYE helps facilitate an appropriate match, which has often resulted in lifelong friendships. Teens and their families communicate directly with the match family and build a relationship prior to the exchange. Program costs consist of a $300 application fee (fully refundable if an approved match is not located), the teens’ airline passes, and spending money.

Exchanges are available to France, Australia, Spain, Germany, Canada, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and other countries. To learn more about IYE, visit www.intlyouth.org or contact Camille Wheeler, a retired Delta Air Lines staff member, at cwheeler@intlyouth.org.

ALPA Negotiations Update
The following is a summary of the status of ALPA contract negotiations by airline as of January 13:

Air Georgian—A notice to bargain was sent on Feb. 22, 2017. Negotiations continue.

Air Transport International—A Section 6 notice was received on Jan. 21, 2016. An application for mediation was filed on July 21, 2017. Negotiations continue.


Frontier—A Section 6 notice was filed on Dec. 3, 2015. An application for mediation was filed on Sept. 22, 2016. Mediation continues.

Jazz Aviation—A notice to bargain was filed on March 28, 2016. Negotiations are under way.

JetBlue—A Section 6 notice was filed on March 2, 2015. Mediation continues.

Spirit—As this issue went to press, the pilots and management had reached an agreement in principle.

WestJet—A notice to bargain was filed on June 6, 2017. Negotiations continue.
Legislative/Political Update

Congress Passes Tax Bill
Late last year, Congress passed H.R. 1, the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which President Trump then signed into law. ALPA worked with Members of Congress to protect tax provisions directly related to pilot jobs and benefits. The most beneficial tax provisions remain mostly untouched. Employer-provided health-care benefits will still be treated as nontaxable income. Pilots won’t see a decrease in the amount that may be contributed toward retirement, nor will they see a decrease in maximum contributions to flexible spending and health spending accounts.

Under the tax reform measure, some current business-related deductions have been eliminated, including uniforms, union dues, moving expenses, and employer-required medical exams. Per diem payments remain untaxed, although any difference between the company reimbursement rate and the federal rate is no longer deductible.

Overall, H.R. 1 permanently lowers the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to 21 percent and cuts the individual rate to varying degrees, depending on income level. However, the provisions pertaining to individuals are not permanent. Most of these provisions will apply to the 2018 tax year and subsequently expire on Dec. 31, 2025, including the elimination of business-related deductions listed above. The expiration of the provisions allows H.R. 1 to comply with the reconciliation instructions included in the budget resolution passed with only Republican support in both chambers.

FAA Reauthorization
While in a holding pattern until closer to the end of the next FAA extension in March 2018, ALPA is cautiously optimistic going into the next round of negotiations on a long-term FAA reauthorization bill. The House bill (H.R. 2997) includes the majority of ALPA’s FAA reauthorization agenda: no rollback or legislative changes to the first officer qualifications and training rules; addressing undeclared hazmat cargo shipping and the safe transport of lithium batteries, and aligning U.S. policy with International Civil Aviation Organization recommendations; improvements to the Aviation Safety Action Program; the safe operation of drones; Human Intervention Motivation Study (HIMS) authorization; mandating physically installed secondary cockpit barriers; and the inclusion of H.R. 2150 to fight flag-of-convenience schemes. The bill contains no additional mental or psychological health screening, no mandate to install cameras in the cockpit, no changes to the Railway Labor Act, no changes to foreign ownership and control rules or cabotage, and no further changes to third-class medical certification.

The Senate bill is not moving forward because of ALPA and others who oppose a provision that would jeopardize aviation safety by weakening first officer qualification and training requirements. Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.), chairman of the Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, has conceded that he doesn’t have the votes to pass the bill because of opposition to the first officer qualification changes. ALPA’s education and advocacy have been key to preventing from moving forward a bill that will degrade safety.

The Association strongly supports air transportation options for small and rural communities and has offered Thune myriad suggestions to improve rural service and ensure that there will be a healthy supply of pilots in the future, including expanding the Essential Air Service Program to student loans for flight training.

Federal Flight Deck Officer Program
The Federal Flight Deck Officer (FFDO) program was fully funded in both the FY2017 and FY2018 funding bills. Despite rumors that President Trump was considering eliminating the program, ALPA was able to secure $22.73 million for the program in FY2017. The House Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill maintains funding at that level for FY2018. However, the Senate Appropriations Committee has yet to consider a Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill for FY2018. A final number for the program is pending passage of the FY2018 Department of Homeland Security measure or an omnibus spending bill.

In addition to the funding battles in 2017, ALPA engaged with the Senate Commerce Committee to win important reforms to the program inside of the TSA Modernization Act (S. 1872). Reforms include increasing access to FFDO training centers, streamlining training requirements, harmonizing the program’s administration with the Federal Air Marshal Service, and creating an “inactive status” for FFDOs who can’t maintain their qualifications due to equipment type or medical leave. The bill has yet to be considered by the full Senate or the House.

ALPA-PAC
For the second time in three years, ALPA-PAC received national recognition in 2017 for the Association’s PAC program by the Public Affairs Council.

ALPA-PAC was a large part of ALPA’s legislative success during the first session of the 115th Congress. The PAC disbursed $2,035,000 to support 363 pilot-partisan candidates and committees in 2017. ALPA-PAC disbursements helped ALPA’s Government Affairs Department and pilot volunteers build strong relationships with decision-makers both in Washington, D.C., and in the districts those decision-makers represent. The PAC supported candidates from all 50 states, encompassing 286 congressional districts and senate seats.

The dedication to a pilot-partisan Congress is evident in how the Association’s PAC funds were distributed: Republican candidates and committees received $998,000 (49.04 percent) of the PAC’s contributions, while $1,037,000 (50.96 percent) went to Democrat candidates and committees.

In related ALPA-PAC news, the pilots of Hawaiian Airlines were the recipients of 2017’s J.J. O’Donnell Trophy for Excellence in Political Action. The J.J. O’Donnell Trophy for Excellence in Political Action was awarded to the pilots of Hawaiian Airlines.
Throughout their difficult contract negotiations and beyond, the Hawaiian Master Executive Council (MEC) found unity in ALPA’s political programs. The MEC reached out to every new-hire and captain-upgrade class over the past two years to encourage its pilots to join ALPA-PAC and participate in the Association’s Calls to Action. That dedication and constant presence increased the pilot group’s participation in ALPA-PAC by 6 percent in 2017, the most growth of any ALPA pilot group.

ALPA congratulates and thanks Capt. Hoon Lee, the Hawaiian MEC chairman; Capt. Frank Worthen, the Hawaiian Government Affairs Committee chairman; and the many other pilots at Hawaiian who helped earn this prestigious award.

NEW ALPA REPS

**As of Dec. 8, 2017, the Election Ballot and Certification Board certified elections results for the following local councils:**

- Air Georgian 201 Capt. James Macarthur, Chairman (Capt. Rep)
- Air Georgian 201 Capt. Mark Budgen, Vice Chairman (F/O Rep)
- Air Georgian 201 F/O Pascal Bandeville, Secretary-Treasurer
- CommutAir 152 Capt. Wesley Blanton, Secretary-Treasurer
- Endeavor Air 127 Capt. Ryan French, Chairman (Capt. Rep)
- Endeavor Air 127 F/O William Brynjolfsson, Vice Chairman (F/O Rep)
- Endeavor Air 127 Capt. Bridget Matarrese, Secretary-Treasurer
- Envoy Air 126 Capt. Ken Wells, Chairman (Capt. Rep)
- Envoy Air 126 F/O Jose Thies, Vice Chairman (F/O Rep)
- Envoy Air 126 Capt. Christopher Tappan, Secretary-Treasurer
- ExpressJet 177 Capt. Christopher Hartka, Chairman (Capt. Rep)
- Jazz Aviation 226 Capt. David Clark, Chairman (Capt. Rep)
- Jazz Aviation 226 F/O Sarah Nelson, Vice Chairman (F/O Rep)
- Mesa 85 F/O Leonard Merriman, Vice Chairman (F/O Rep)

**As of January 10, the Election Ballot and Certification Board certified elections results for the following local councils:**

- Endeavor 128 Capt. Jessica Wolcott, Chairman (Capt. Rep)
- ExpressJet 175 Capt. Jeremy Lind, Secretary-Treasurer

*The Human Intervention Motivation Study (HIMS) is a proven, peer-based alcohol/substance abuse assistance program for airline pilots. ALPA HIMS is part of the Association’s Air Safety Organization Pilot Assistance Group.*

**SPOT THE SIGNS**

- Irregular work attendance.
- Declining work performance.
- Changes in personal appearance.
- Mood swings.
- Unusual behavioral patterns.
- Withdrawal from normal responsibilities.
- Relationship and family strife.

*The above is not a comprehensive list. Please visit [www.HIMSprogram.com](http://www.HIMSprogram.com) for assistance and to learn more. Click the Get Help Now tab, followed by the Pilot Referral Info link.*
In Memoriam
“To fly west, my friend, is a flight we all must take for a final check.”
AUTHOR UNKNOWN

2011
Capt. P.W. Downes  US Airways  October
Capt. Clarence F. Pfeffer  TWA  February
Capt. W. F. Eastwood  FedEx Express  August

2016
Capt. D.E. Montgomery  United  May
Capt. Ronald F. Bures  US Airways  July
PO Regis G. Conti  United  August
Capt. Larry D. Harrow  Flying Tigers/FedEx Express  August
Capt. Dennis W. Burton  Northwest  August
Capt. Steven A. Ray  Delta  September
Capt. Ronald R. Ryf  Delta  September
Capt. Steve N. Boessene  FedEx Express  October
Capt. B.S. Carstensen  Northwest  October
Capt. Richard O. Fagan  US Airways  October
Capt. J.H. Fennel  Northwest  October
Capt. Robert M. MacKenzie  Airtime  October

Capt. James D. Mansfield  United  October
PO Frank X. Tipton  Delta  October
Capt. S. Barry Warfield  Eastern  October
PO Scott J. Wood  Delta  October
Capt. F.J. Busker  Northwest  November
PO Charles H. Craig, Jr.  Pan American  November
Capt. Ronald P. Guccis  FedEx Express  November
Capt. Clare A. Davis  Northwest  November
Capt. Michael H. Eden  US Airways  November
Capt. R.E. Frizzell  Delta  November
Capt. Steven C. Hane  Continental  November
Capt. Robert D. Harris  Delta  November
Capt. William J. Hopper  Continental  November
Capt. Kenneth M. Jones  US Airways  November
Capt. Robert J. MacKay  Delta  November
Capt. David B. Malone  United  November
Capt. Lawrence E. Owen  Northwest  November
Capt. David J. Roth  Northwest  November
Capt. Gerald F. Seaton  Northwest  November
Capt. Robert E. Swanson  Endeavor Air/Pinnacle Express Airlines  November
Capt. James C. Timlin, Jr.  Delta  November
Capt. E.J. Waldo  Delta  November
Capt. Jack G. Bloz  Delta  December
Capt. Robert E. McDowell  Delta  December

Compiled from information provided by ALPA’s Membership Administration Department.

REGISTER TODAY:
2018 Interview Workshops!
Registration: CareerDevelopment.alpa.org

- Expert advice from Cage Marshall Consulting
- How to make your best impression on airline hiring managers
- Résumé review and personal mock interview
- Free to ALPA members!

March 21  ➤ Reno
May 9–11  ➤ Atlanta
June 18–20  ➤ Washington, D.C.
September 19–21  ➤ Denver

Hosted by ALPA’s Fee-for-Departure Committee
Each year the Association sponsors four $3,000 scholarships that are available to the dependent children of medically retired, long-term disabled, or deceased ALPA members. The vice president–administration/secretary and vice president–finance/treasurer review all applications, select the recipient, and report to the Executive Council on their selection. One scholarship is granted to an enrolling college freshman and is renewable for three additional years, provided the student maintains an adequate grade point average, and, under that proviso, three scholarship renewals are made to a sophomore, junior, and senior.

All applications received are carefully reviewed with serious consideration given to financial need, as well as academic performance, before a selection is made. At the time new applications are reviewed, the academic records of those currently enrolled college students are also reviewed to determine their eligibility to receive renewals of their scholarships.

We want to remind you of this educational assistance program and to urge you to encourage those students who meet the eligibility requirement and who wish to pursue a college education to apply for the annual award.

Applications may be obtained from Yvonne Willits, Air Line Pilots Association, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036, and must be received no later than April 1, 2018. Additionally, we would like to bring to your attention that, on several occasions, contributions have been made to the ALPA Scholarship Fund in memory of a deceased member, or simply as a kind gesture on the part of a member to further the financial assistance by the Association to a student. In the past, depending on the amount available, these funds have been used to augment the awards of current recipients or as a one-time financial assistance award to a needy applicant. We ask that you forward this information to your master executive council in case anyone wants to make a voluntary contribution to this separate fund.

Sincerely,

Capt. Randy Helling
Vice President–Finance/Treasurer
ALPA Pilots Visit Eastern Kentucky University

ALPA’s Education Committee volunteers recently visited Eastern Kentucky University as part of an ongoing strategic initiative to mentor the next generation of pilots.

This was ALPA’s first visit to the university. Capt. Jay Fogle (Spirit) and F/Os Drew Owen (Spirit), Jim Spencer (FedEx Express), and Kayan Todiwalla (Trans States) began the visit by talking with faculty about the committee’s objectives and the benefits of ALPA’s professional development program for the school and its students. This was followed by a presentation to 65 students about a “day in the life” of an airline pilot, where ALPA pilots shared their experiences and answered questions about flying the line. The visit was a tremendous success, and the university is interested in formalizing a partnership with ALPA to enhance its program.

ALPA Pilots Attend Indiana University’s Flight Safety Event

At Indiana State University, approximately 130 students attended the school’s annual flight safety event in November 2017. F/Os Richard Swindell (United), Chris Fuson (United), Erin Garrett (United), Christian Jimenez (United), and Corey Stutsman (United) talked with students about winter operations. Afterward, ALPA pilots presented a plaque to Harry Minniear, interim chairman and associate professor in the Department of Aviation Technology, to commemorate the formation of the professional development program.

The Association’s alliance with Indiana University was formalized earlier in 2017, and the program continues to flourish with active student participation. Working under ALPA’s Professional Development Group, the Education Committee promotes the piloting profession, mentors aspiring aviators, and prepares future generations of pilots to join the ranks of ALPA members. For more information or to get involved, contact Education@alpa.org.

ALPA ACE Students Tour United Maintenance Hangar

ALPA ACE Club students from Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Daytona Beach, Fla., recently took a behind-the-scenes tour of the United Airlines maintenance hangar in Orlando, Fla., as part of a strategic ALPA initiative to mentor aspiring aviators. Coordinating the visit were ALPA Education Committee volunteers Capts. Brent Grumbine (PSA), Fred Kopec (Delta), and Bill Kurz (Delta) and F/O Costas Sivyllis (United).

The 25 students were divided into smaller groups for tours guided by mechanics. On display were three B-737s in various stages of heavy maintenance checks. Over the course of two hours, students were shown the inner workings of an airplane and spent time on the flight deck of a transport-category aircraft. The tech ops team answered every question in detail and also provided an emergency exit demonstration.

This field trip was a valuable experience for the students and also provided some mid-semester motivation. Student Tyler Michienzi said, “One of my favorite parts so far about the ALPA ACE Club is the exposure to larger corporations and operations within the aviation industry.... It encourages me more than ever to work toward my goal of becoming an airline pilot with a large carrier.”

Thanks to the United Master Executive Council and United Airlines for working with the Education Committee to help bridge the gap between the classroom and the flight deck—providing real-world information, tools, and resources to further prepare collegiate aviators for their careers.

Working under ALPA’s Professional Development Group, the Education Committee promotes the piloting profession, mentors aspiring aviators, and prepares future generations of pilots to join the ranks of ALPA members. For more information or to get involved, contact Education@alpa.org.
Pilots for Pilots (P4P) provides disaster relief to ALPA members in need, but funds are running out. Please donate today to ensure that every single ALPA member who needs help gets it.

Visit www.alpa.org/relieffund to learn more about P4P and donate today.

Air Line Pilots Association, Int’l

P4P NEEDS YOUR HELP

Canada

PAISSENGER SECURITY SCREENING CHANGES TAKE EFFECT IN CANADA

Transport Canada recently announced amendments to its passenger screening requirements to “reflect changes in the security environment and to harmonize with international standards and partner countries.” The revisions concern Transport Canada’s prohibited items list and became effective on Nov. 27, 2017, for all domestic and international flights. There are two primary effects of these changes:
- Small knife blades (i.e., measuring 6 centimetres) are now allowed through preboard security screening and may be carried in the aircraft cabin.
- Powders of a volume greater than 350 millilitres (the size of a small soft-drink can) are now prohibited at preboard security screening and may not be carried in the aircraft cabin.

In developing these changes, Transport Canada conducted an internal risk assessment that concluded the security risk from removing small blades from the prohibited items list was low. Previously prohibited multitools containing blades are now permitted, provided the blade doesn’t exceed 6 centimetres. The removal of small blades from the prohibited items list brings Canada in line with current International Civil Aviation Organization security recommendations.

Note: For flights to the United States, the prohibition on all knife blades remains in place, consistent with Transportation Security Administration security screening standards.

For more information, contact ALPA’s Engineering & Air Safety Department at 1-800-424-2470 or at EAS@alpa.org.

Correction

In “The Landing,” page 37 of the December 2017 issue, Fact Number 04 refers to leading edge slats. The B-747 does not have slats, but rather leading edge Krueger flaps—which are designed to increase the camber of the wing.

Solution to this month’s ALPA sudoku on page 62.

<p>| | | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From left, Capt. Dan Adamus (Jazz Aviation), ALPA Canada president, and Sen. Michael MacDonald, Member of the Senate Standing Committee on Transportation and Communications, attend the 15th annual ALPA Canada holiday reception on Dec. 5, 2017, which brought together ALPA pilots and staff, Members of Parliament, senators, government officials, and senior-level airline executives.
Jet Fuel

Labor and jet fuel are the top two expenses for most U.S. mainline carriers, accounting for 40–60 percent of total operating costs. Jet fuel for U.S. mainline carriers, on average, accounted for approximately 17.4 percent and 17.7 percent of airline operating expenses in 2016 and for the nine-month period ending Sept. 30, 2017, respectively.

As a result of the significant decline in the price of jet fuel in recent years, labor costs are now the largest expense for most U.S. legacy carriers, including American, Delta, and United. However, jet fuel remains the single-largest expense for most U.S. ultra-low-cost carriers, including Frontier and Spirit. The cost of jet fuel for Frontier and Spirit accounted for more than a quarter of each airline’s expenses for the nine-month period ending Sept. 30, 2017.

While the average price for jet fuel has fallen since 2013, the price began to increase again during 2017—and this increase has accelerated in the past few months. As a result, U.S. airlines face a new cost headwind going into 2018.

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration, crude oil prices ended 2017 at $60 per barrel, the highest end-of-year price since 2013. West Texas Intermediate crude oil prices averaged $51 per barrel in 2017, up $7 per barrel from the 2016 average. Brent prices have increased $10 per barrel since the end of 2016 and ended 2017 at $65 per barrel—widening the Brent–West Texas Intermediate spread to $5 per barrel at the end of the year, the largest difference since 2013.

As a result of rising crude oil prices, jet fuel costs have increased. In June, the market price for jet fuel averaged $1.30 per gallon, and in October, jet fuel prices averaged $1.66 per gallon. Consistent with previous monthly increases, the cost of jet fuel climbed to an average of nearly $1.80 per gallon during this past December, approximately 31 cents higher than the December 2016 price.

Analysts and crude oil futures market data are projecting that jet fuel prices will increase by 7 percent annually in both 2018 and 2019. Although financial performance for U.S. mainline carriers is expected to be solid by historic standards, the higher projected jet fuel costs will drive up unit costs and likely outpace revenue growth, resulting in stagnant margins in 2018.
The indisputable power of pilots acting in solidarity to promote and advance their careers and profession is more apparent than ever as ALPA’s 59,000-plus members from across the United States and Canada negotiated and ratified new working agreements, advocated for their careers and profession, and promoted the piloting profession to the next generation of aviators.

Last year saw Air Georgian, Encore, and WestJet pilots vote for ALPA representation, expanding and bolstering the Association’s member ranks. New working agreements achieved at Hawaiian, Mesa, and Endeavor together with contract enhancements at CommuterAir, Delta, ExpressJet, FedEx Express, United, and Wasaya brought increased gains for Association members.

ALPA pilots promoted pilot- and airline-favorable polices on both Capitol and Parliament Hills and spent time nurturing the next generation of pilots to ensure that the future of the profession remains strong.

And through it all, the pilots of ALPA transported millions of passengers and tons of cargo safely to their destinations, personifying the Association’s motto of “Schedule with Safety” to the world.

Turn the page to begin reading about each of ALPA’s pilot groups and their challenges and opportunities as they’re trained for life to advance their careers and the airline piloting profession. ❯
AIR GEORGIAN
NEGOTIATING A STRONGER COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

BY JULIE MAYES, ALPA SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

For nearly 20 years, the pilots, flight attendants, and maintenance and administrative staff of Air Georgian Limited, an Air Canada Express carrier, made up one bargaining unit registered as the Ontario Regional Employee Association. But by the close of 2016, the in-house union had become unable to support the labour needs of the various employee groups.

“Expanded flying for Air Canada Express led us to triple our pilot numbers within just the last five years,” said Capt. James Macarthur, the pilot group’s Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. “We knew we needed to negotiate a new contract with industry-standard salaries as well as additional pilot-specific quality-of-life improvements.”

Approaching the expiration date of their collective bargaining agreement, the pilots looked to ALPA representation and the Association’s unmatched resources to advance their goals. In February 2017, with more than 85 percent of eligible pilots participating in the representation election, 99 percent voted in favour of joining the Association, sending a clear message that Air Georgian’s Toronto, Ont.- and Calgary, Alb.-based pilots recognized the importance of being members of the world’s largest and most influential pilots’ union. The other employee groups sent similar messages by voting for two other unions to best represent their respective needs.

“We welcome our colleagues at Air Georgian and look forward to the contributions they will bring to our union,” said Capt. Tim Canoll, ALPA’s president, after the results of the representation election were announced. “Air Georgian pilots are committed to advancing their careers and, by gaining access to ALPA’s professional resources, are now poised to achieve their goals. Through collaborative efforts, ALPA pilots across North America help to advance our profession and ensure that we maintain the safest air transport systems in the world.”

Despite a positive start, Air Georgian Limited took several opportunities to challenge the Canada Industrial Relations Board’s (CIRB) certification of ALPA as the bargaining representative for the Air Georgian pilots. The privately held carrier, which is headquartered in Mississauga, Ont., fought the CIRB’s decision with a lengthy appeal. The pilots’ MEC, backed by ALPA’s vast resources, succeeded in challenging the company’s application for reconsideration at the CIRB.

The pilots have also been successful regarding the handling and disposition of many grievances and arbitrations. But recently the MEC has had to move forward with an unfair labour practice (ULP) complaint against management, one that it had hoped could be withdrawn. The complaint stemmed from management’s refusal to, among other things, properly collect and remit ALPA dues and provide necessary information for bargaining. While it appeared that the matter worked itself out with management making good on the dues and providing some basic bargaining information, the company’s leadership team has forced the Association to proceed to a ULP hearing given its refusal to release pilot negotiators and provide the pertinent data needed for negotiations.

“The pilots’ morale has improved significantly since joining ALPA,” said Macarthur. “ALPA representation is providing the pilot group with needed stability and resources necessary to hold management accountable for its lawful duties, such as bargaining in good faith with employees.”

The Association is now representing the airline’s more than 260 pilots in negotiations. “This puts us on a much better footing to negotiate a pilot-centric contract—a first for this pilot group,” noted Macarthur. “We’re excited to move toward our new future by negotiating a strong collective agreement, and we’re prepared to assert all our legal rights to secure that agreement.”

In operation for more than 25 years, Air Georgian flies more than 550,000 passengers annually to about two dozen U.S. and Canadian destinations. With hubs at Toronto’s Pearson International Airport and Calgary’s International Airport, the carrier’s fleet includes Bombardier CRJ200s and Beechcraft B1900Ds, flying for Air Canada Express.
**AIR TRANSAT**  
**A PATH TO CONTINUED SUCCESS**  
**BY JULIE MAYES, ALPA SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST**

Last year as Air Transat celebrated 30 years in operation, the carrier’s 580-plus pilots launched a new era of pilot leadership with a first: the election of a Toronto, Ont.-based pilot, Capt. Sébastien Roussel, as the pilot group’s Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman after the MEC opted for a two-council structure. In addition, in August the four voting members of the MEC elected Capt. Piero Desjardins as the MEC vice chairman and Capt. Pierre Lessard as the MEC secretary-treasurer.

The MEC’s focus in 2017 centered on enforcing the five-year collective agreement the pilot group reached with management in 2016 and on setting a course for an amicable relationship with the company, which has undergone various changes to its corporate structure and will be transitioning from the current widebody Airbus/narrowbody Boeing fleet to an all-Airbus fleet.

“The B-737 was necessary to compete with the competition and helped grow our pilot group to the numbers we have today,” said Roussel. “The pilots rose to the challenge of being dually qualified on widebody Airbuses and narrowbody Boeings. Having succeeded with this model, in spite of the training challenges and scheduling problems, the group welcomes the change to an all-Airbus mixed-fleet flying model.”

In November 2017, Air Transat celebrated its 30th anniversary in Montreal, Que., with the unveiling of new A330s and a new livery. The company also updated its fleet with the purchase of new A321LRs to replace aging A310s, signing an agreement with Dublin, Ireland-based AerCap to lease 10 A321LRs. The airline also maintains two A330s on wet- and damp-lease in Warsaw, Poland, and Dusseldorf, Germany.

In 2018, the pilots will continue to work with management and ALPA’s Government Affairs Department to ensure compliance with the new rules surrounding Canada’s Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Due in large part to ALPA’s efforts, Parliament mandated in 2014 that Canadian airlines would no longer be allowed to staff seasonal variations in fleet capacity with foreign pilots when unemployed Canadian pilots are available for hire.

“We’re keeping a close eye on the Temporary Foreign Worker program,” noted Roussel. “It’s imperative that the program is no longer used as an unfair labour advantage by airlines in Canada. The campaign against this practice was arduous as it involved educating multiple government departments.”

In addition to taking on a key role in supporting improvements to Canada’s federal aviation standards, the group also continues to support its local communities. In 2017, Air Transat pilots cosponsored an annual gala for Quebec’s Carrefour Pour Elle Foundation, an organization and shelter that helps provide support to women and children affected by domestic violence. The pilots also partnered with Moisson Laurentides, a local food bank, for a holiday drive culminating in the pilots dedicating a day of service during which they worked a shift at the charity’s warehouse.

**AT A GLANCE**

- **PILOTS JOINED ALPA:** 1999
- **NUMBER OF PILOTS:** 580+
- **PILOT BASES:** Montreal, Que., and Toronto, Ont.
- **OPERATIONS:** The Canadian leisure carrier provides scheduled and charter flying, transporting more than 2.5 million passengers to nearly 60 destinations in 30 countries each year
- **FLEET:** A310-300s, A330-200s/-300s, and B-737-700s/-800s. Coming in 2018: A320s and A321s

**TOP:** An Air Transat A330-200 at Montreal–Pierre Elliott Trudeau International Airport.

**BELOW:** Air Transat pilots present Moisson Laurentides, a local food bank, with a donation during a holiday food drive in December 2017.
PILOT GROUP PROFILES

AIR TRANSPORT INTERNATIONAL
PILOTS SEEK CONTRACT GAINS

BY JOHN PERKINSON, SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Despite a rocky end to 2016, 2017 provided some added stability for the pilots of Air Transport International (ATI). The International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) launched the Internal Medicine Board (NMB) to determine whether ABX Air, Inc. and ATI—both wholly owned subsidiaries of the Air Transport Services Group, Inc. (ATSG)—“constitute a single transportation system for the purposes of representation of the crewmembers [pilots and flight engineers].”

The Teamsters, which represents ABX pilots, contended that although ATSG operates the two airlines separately, they work in the same segment of the air cargo industry and serve the same primary customers. ALPA, like ATI and ABX management, disagreed with the Teamsters’ assertion, pointing out that there is no integration of operations, labor relations, or financial control between the two carriers. The NMB sided with ALPA and management by dismissing the case in May 2017.

“We also noted that ATI and ABX have two distinct operating certificates,” said Capt. Tom Rogers, the ATI pilot group’s Master Executive Council (MEC) chair. “We’re happy that this is behind us so that we can refocus our attention on contract negotiations.”

The tone of the latest round of negotiations, which began in 2014, took a positive turn in spring 2016 when ATI secured a new customer. Amazon Fulfillment Services approved a five- to seven-year deal with ATSG to provide air cargo transport. In addition to support for the Air Mobility Command (U.S. Air Force), DHL, and its other existing clients, ATI began flying Amazon Prime Air Flights.

Management and labor soon returned to the bargaining table, and in 2017 hammered out most of the remaining contractual issues. However, scope, line construction, retirement and insurance, and compensation remained stumbling blocks for the two parties, and in July 2017 ALPA petitioned the NMB requesting mediation. The agency agreed, and a mediator was assigned with meeting dates scheduled for February 2018.

“The situation at ATI greatly improved with the Amazon Prime Air flying,” remarked Rogers, noting that the carrier continues to grow in fleet size and number of pilots. However, ATI pilots are paid well below industry standards. “Offering competitive salaries and benefits will be critical to ensuring that our pilots don’t leave to fly for better-paying airlines. We need to improve our compensation package if we’re going to attract and retain the workforce we need.”

At the beginning of last year, Amazon announced plans to construct a $1.5 billion services hub for Amazon Prime Air at Cincinnati/Northern Kentucky International Airport. ATI moved its Wilmington, Ohio, cargo operation there, using DHL facilities until the construction is complete. The move created some initial scheduling challenges, but these have since been ironed out.

The carrier has also been facing some other challenges, including the number of new hires and rapid upgrades to captain. While these changes represent opportunities for ATI crewmembers, the level of experience or “time in seat” has recently been declining. The MEC responded last summer with a new mentoring program designed to help bridge these gaps. Union pilot volunteers wearing orange ATI MEC Mentoring Team lanyards are now available to answer line, loading, scheduling, and other operational questions.

In addition, the pilot group has begun publishing Common Ground, a quarterly safety newsletter to highlight operational trends from ATIS’s ASAP, which encourages nonpunitive voluntary reporting of safety issues and events to limit/prevent future accidents and incidents, to support the airline’s Safety Management System.

Rogers remains upbeat about the progress ATI has made in recent years. "Our pilots are reasonably happy, and we have a generally positive relationship with management," he observed. "We don't file a lot of grievances, and we have great clients. However, we need to nail down this contract to meet our operational needs and attract and retain pilots to secure the future of our carrier," he added.

“Offering competitive salaries and benefits will be critical to ensuring that our pilots don’t leave to fly for better-paying airlines. We need to improve our compensation package if we’re going to attract and retain the workforce we need.”

AT A GLANCE

PILOTS JOINED ALPA: 2009
NUMBER OF PILOTS: 254
HEADQUARTERS: Irving, Tex.
PILOT BASES: Pilots are home-based
OPERATIONS: A subsidiary of Air Transport Services Group, Inc., Air Transport International is a U.S. charter airline offering worldwide passenger and air cargo ACMI operations
FLEET: 4 B-757-200s, 4 B-757-200 combis, 7 B-767-200Fs, and 9 B-767-300Fs

AIR TRANSPORT INTERNATIONAL
B-767-300 in Prime Air livery prepares to touch down.
Having spent 2016 wondering if their airline was flying off into the sunset due to the uncertainty of the company’s future, the pilots of Air Wisconsin in 2017 began the welcome transition of flying for a new carrier, even as their protracted contract negotiations dragged into a seventh year.

The contract that Air Wisconsin, the nation’s largest privately held regional airline, had with American Airlines, Its only mainline partner, was set to expire in March 2017. With little information from the company on its future plans, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) had launched a campaign called “2018: Sunrise or Sunset?” to educate pilots on the true nature of the company’s future with AAG, the parent company of American, and encourage the pilots to make alternate plans should no new agreement with AAG emerge.

Fortunately for the pilots, the sun did rise in early 2017 when a five-year capacity purchase agreement was signed with United Airlines to operate as a United Express carrier. The deal with United includes a career path program that gives the pilots an opportunity to be hired at United. Throughout 2017, the MEC offered a series of career workshops and other programs to better prepare its members for jobs at the mainline carrier.

“Thanks to United, we’ve been able to shift the MEC’s focus from preparing our pilots for potential job loss to improving their career progression and most importantly trying to achieve a new contract,” said Capt. Chris Suhs, the pilots’ MEC chairman.

The pilots’ contract is more than a decade old, and negotiations for a new agreement began in 2010. Thanks to language that provides small raises each year, until recently the pilots had kept pace with their peers in terms of compensation. The company has fallen behind, however, as the strong market for pilots has given seasoned aviators better options. Carriers like Endeavor Air have raised the bar with newer, more lucrative agreements that permanently raise pay instead of offering temporary bonuses.

“The Endeavor agreement marked a shift for the entire industry, and we hope our management realizes that,” Suhs said. “Air Wisconsin will never be able to attract the pilots it needs to rebuild our operation until it understands that bonuses and retention payments are no substitute for higher pay rates that recognize everyone’s contributions—not just a few of us.”

Air Wisconsin operated its first revenue flight for United in September, a welcome homecoming for more senior pilots who remember when the airline was United’s largest regional partner and a major operator in the Midwest in the 1980s and 1990s. After closing several of its former American Eagle domiciles, new pilot bases have opened in United’s hubs at Washington Dulles and Chicago O’Hare International Airports. A portion of the airline’s fleet is now wearing United colors, and the transition from American to United will be complete in mid-February.

Due to a steady drain of pilots leaving the airline in 2016 and early 2017 because of Air Wisconsin’s uncertain future, understaffing remains a major problem. Junior manning is rampant, and the airline has also resorted to using line check airmen as fill-in pilots. Poor hotels and other quality-of-life violations have led to an increase in grievances and a deep dissatisfaction with management within the pilot group.

“We want Air Wisconsin to once again be a career destination offering stable, long-term employment. The MEC and committee volunteers are working hard to represent the group’s interests and make that happen, but we have no illusions about how difficult 2018 could be,” Suhs said. “We hope to reach an agreement after seven long years of bargaining, but our pilot group is unified in its resolve to do what is necessary to get a contract.”

“Thanks to United, we’ve been able to shift the MEC’s focus from preparing our pilots for potential job loss to improving their career progression and most importantly trying to achieve a new contract.”

AT A GLANCE
PILOTS JOINED ALPA: 1982
NUMBER OF PILOTS: approximately 525
OPERATIONS: The largest privately held fee-for-departure airline in the U.S., Air Wisconsin carries nearly 6 million passengers each year via nearly 350 daily departures to 71 cities in 26 states and 3 Canadian provinces for American Eagle and United Express. The airline will serve United exclusively by March 2018.
HEADQUARTERS: Appleton, Wisc.
FLEET: 65 Bombardier CRJ200s
early two years after Alaska Airlines announced that it would be buying Virgin America and merging the two airlines, the Alaska Airlines and Virgin America pilots are continuing the process of bringing their two groups together.

On Oct. 30, 2017, the first step in the merger process—reaching a joint collective bargaining agreement—concluded when an arbitration panel issued a decision on the combined group's pay, 401(k) retirement benefits, and scope. Pay increases for all pilots and increases to the defined-contribution percentage of the retirement plan were achieved for some but not all pilots. The pilot group had sought even larger increases in an agreement that conformed fully with those of industry peers at other successful airlines. The arbitrated decision fell short in all three areas, leaving the pilots behind peers at other successful airlines.

“Negotiations were forced to arbitration, which was required in the event of a merger under the terms of the 2009 agreement, because throughout 2017 Alaska management refused to take seriously the need to negotiate an agreement on par with other airlines, which is frustrating and disappointing,” said Capt. Chris Notaro, the Alaska pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. “This did not need to go to arbitration. Management’s position throughout negotiations and in arbitration—and the fact that management was not able to work with us to reach a negotiated agreement—says a lot about the way the company views labor.”

With a joint collective bargaining agreement in place, the pilots have turned their attention to implementing the agreement, and to the next steps dictated by ALPA merger policy—integrating seniority lists and then merging the MECs.

Focus also has shifted to April 1, 2020, when the arbitrated joint collective bargaining agreement becomes amendable. No arbitration clause applies for this negotiation, and the normal Section 6 process will apply. Alaska/Virgin America pilots are expecting and readying themselves for a contentious fight with management when negotiations begin.

“Based on management’s statements and short-term thinking during the just-completed joint contract negotiations, we expect to have a fight on our hands in 2020 to improve our collective bargaining agreement,” Notaro said. “The unity displayed by the Alaska and Virgin America pilots during joint collective bargaining negotiations provides an excellent foundation on which to build for the next two years. We will be ready to make further improvements to our arbitrated result in this joint bargaining agreement.”

“The unity displayed by the Alaska and Virgin America pilots during joint collective bargaining negotiations provides an excellent foundation on which to build for the next two years.”
ExpressJet Airlines was caught by surprise when mainline partner Delta Air Lines announced plans to cancel its capacity purchase agreement with the Atlanta, Ga.-based operation. On Aug. 10, 2017, Delta publicized plans to reposition its Delta Connection aircraft with other regional carriers and cease operations with ExpressJet by November 2018. This decision particularly affects the former Atlantic Southeast Airlines pilots, who fly as part of ExpressJet but who remain separate from their legacy ExpressJet peers, despite the procurement of a single operating certificate in 2011.

While ExpressJet flies as part of the American Eagle network out of Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, the bulk of its Atlantic Southeast flying has been as a Delta Connection carrier. As ExpressJet scrambles to recover from this news, it searches for a new mainline partner for this portion of its operation to secure future flying and halt any further downsizing.

“The pilots have been down before, and they’ve always performed through it to come back out on top,” said Capt. Chromer Smith, the Atlantic Southeast pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. “I have no doubt that this will happen again.”

Smith noted that legacy ExpressJet also performs United Express flying and that Atlantic Southeast pilots previously provided feed for United Airlines at its hub at Washington Dulles International Airport. He and other members of the MEC are working closely with management in the hopes of reestablishing this relationship. “A teamwork approach is critical if we’re going to make this work,” he said.

With the Delta capacity purchase agreement winding down, the airline closed its Detroit, Mich., pilot base in December 2017. In addition to this consolidation, the airline, like many other regional carriers, is losing pilots as baby boomers retire and others elect to fill vacancies at major and national airlines.

To help meet the airline’s scheduling needs, the MEC allowed a portion of the pilots—qualified and paid as captains—to fly as first officers. This flexibility enables the airline to maintain its productivity and operational performance. The pilots and management have also hammered out several other positive arrangements during the past year.

Last June, the two parties negotiated a package of economic incentives including signing and retention bonuses. In addition, ExpressJet management and the two pilot groups reached agreement on an integrated seniority list. Although some fences exist, this new list makes it easier for Atlantic Southeast and ExpressJet pilots to transition between the two pilot groups.

In a joint statement released in August, Smith and Capt. Dave Allen, then the ExpressJet MEC chairman, commented, “Our two pilot groups have now become lifeboats for each other,” emphasizing that the two groups are communicating and working closely together to ensure that their members take full advantage of all ExpressJet flying opportunities. Air Transport International also announced a new preferential hiring policy for ALPA members like Atlantic Southeast pilots. While this is a welcome opportunity, ExpressJet continues to explore options to shore up this reduction in its flying.

Atlantic Southeast Airlines began operations in 1979, flying a single 19-passenger de Havilland Canada DHC-6 Twin Otter turboprop aircraft between Atlanta and Columbus, Ga. Over the years, Atlantic Southeast expanded its fleet and upgraded its operation. Delta acquired the carrier in 1999, selling it to SkyWest, Inc. in 2005. Now part of ExpressJet, the Atlantic Southeast MEC remains hopeful that it can secure new opportunities for its members.

“Our two pilot groups have now become lifeboats for each other,’ emphasizing that the two groups are communicating and working closely together to ensure that their members take full advantage of all ExpressJet flying opportunities.”

---

AT A GLANCE

PILOTS JOINED ALPA: 1,987
NUMBER OF PILOTS: 1,016
HEADQUARTERS: Atlanta, Ga.
PILOT BASES: Atlanta, Ga.; New York, N.Y.; and Dallas/Fort Worth, Tex.
FLEET: 45 CRJ700s and 24 CRJ900s

TOP: An ExpressJet CRJ700 in American Airlines livery parks at Santa Fe Regional Airport in New Mexico.
BEARSKIN
AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

BY JEN LOFQUIST, ALPA SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Over the past few years, Bearskin Airlines on the surface remains unchanged. Fifty pilots fly the same 11 Fairchild Swearingen Metroliners. They fly the same routes to the same 12 destinations in northern Ontario and Manitoba. And the company remains based in Thunder Bay, Ont.—a city on the shores of Lake Superior.

Yet take a closer look at the pilot group, and you’ll see a dramatic change beneath the surface due to unprecedented attrition as pilots leave the airline for new opportunities. The pilots are a sea of new faces that recent trends suggest may not stay at Bearskin for very long.

This rapid attrition is a serious challenge to the airline and the pilot group. Capt. Dan Parnham, the pilots’ longtime Master Executive Council chairman, left in 2017 to take a job at another airline, leaving Capt. Robert Marsh as acting chairman until elections were held in December. At that time, Capt. Kim Steingass was elected temporary MEC chairman.

“We simply can’t keep captains at Bearskin. The opportunities at other airlines and other carriers are just too attractive for our pilots,” said Marsh. “Bearskin, like so many small carriers like us, simply can’t match other carriers in career progression and pay potential. Though we used to see it only with first officers, now even captains are leaving.”

In April 2017, Jazz Aviation added Bearskin to its pathways program, which provides a career path from smaller carriers to Jazz and then potentially on to Air Canada through the pilot mobility arrangement. Although this has given many pilots opportunities with the larger carriers, the sheer number of pilots needed at other carriers has added to the attrition rate at Bearskin and put a strain on recruitment efforts.

And this attrition isn’t expected to end any time soon. The lower wages that small airlines pay simply aren’t attracting pilots. Bearskin is particularly having difficulty hiring pilots as it’s based in a smaller community far away from the larger cities that are typically the hometowns of many of the pilots in flight schools.

“For young pilots, this is a wonderful chance to chase a dream of flying mainline or at one of the larger carriers,” said Marsh, “but this leaves carriers like Bearskin struggling to fill our cockpits. The lure of higher salaries and bigger cities is just far more attractive than working in the smaller communities that Bearskin serves.”

The attrition has also affected union activities. The MEC saw long-term officers and volunteers leave the airline, and the ranks of trained and experienced volunteers have been greatly diminished.

In late 2016, Bearskin announced a partnership with Perimeter Aviation. Both are owned by the same parent company, Exchange Income Corporation. This partnership includes a single ticketing and reservation system and may eventually include a merger of the two pilot groups. The approximately 150 Perimeter pilots, along with the airline’s flight attendants, are currently represented by Unifor Local 2002. In February 2017, the Perimeter pilots voted in their first collective agreement since joining Unifor in 2016.

“We simply don’t know what the future will hold for Bearskin pilots,” said Marsh. “It’s a difficult time for not only the pilots who’ve been here for a long time, but also for the new pilots brought on almost monthly. We’ve faced challenges before and have come out on the other side. We’re just waiting to see what the other side will look like.”

“For young pilots, this is a wonderful chance to chase a dream of flying mainline or at one of the larger carriers, but this leaves carriers like Bearskin struggling to fill our cockpits. The lure of higher salaries and bigger cities is just far more attractive than working in the smaller communities that Bearskin serves.”
CALM AIR
READY FOR CONTRACT GAINS IN 2018
BY CHRISTOPHER FREEZE, SENIOR AVIATION TECHNICAL WRITER

As 2018 begins, the pilots of Calm Air are preparing to begin bargaining for a new collective agreement with management—a process that the pilot group believes will result in gains for both the pilots and the airline.

In March of last year, Calm Air pilots elected new Master Executive Council (MEC) officers whose terms began in May. Capt. Brendan Potter, MEC chairman; Capt. Matt Tinker, MEC vice chairman; and Capt. Neal Gouriluk, MEC secretary-treasurer, then began their MEC duties by meeting with ALPA staff to develop a strategic plan and short- and long-term goals and objectives for the pilot group and to prepare for 2018 contract negotiations.

On December 31, a notice to bargain was sent to management, marking the week of January 20 as the official start of negotiations. “Working closely with ALPA’s Canada Board officers, developing a game plan with our ALPA staff members, and eventually using interest-based negotiations, we’ll be well prepared to address our pilots’ concerns and goals during our upcoming negotiations,” said Potter. “We expect a very civil process that should take just a few months, not a number of years that some pilot groups have experienced. We expect a win-win resolution for both the pilots and the company.”

While Calm Air has lost flying due to its cargo clients needing fewer charters, the loss has been offset by an increase in transporting freight for another cargo client. The airline operates from bases in Thompson and Winnipeg in Manitoba, along with a hub in Rankin Inlet in Nunavut. The pilots provide scheduled passenger and regular cargo service to more than 20 communities in Canada’s northern and central provinces, some of the remotest locations on the globe. Calm Air is the only direct-service air carrier from Manitoba’s northern cities to Winnipeg. It also provides scheduled service to communities in Nunavut as far north as the Arctic Circle. A vital lifeline to many communities, most of the airline’s flights also carry household goods, such as food, fuel, and supplies. A typical flight can carry off-road vehicles, building supplies, and bulk gas to isolated communities that semitrailer trucks are unable to reach.

Due to the challenging nature of Calm Air’s operations, the airline has been facing increased pilot attrition. “The operational environment of our airline is a challenging one for pilots with families. As such, the morale of our pilots isn’t what it should be,” said Capt. Jeffrey Jacobs, who was elected MEC vice chairman on December 1 after the previous vice chairman left the airline in October. Earlier in the year, the MEC’s secretary-treasurer left for another airline and was replaced by Capt. Trevor Wilcox. “In addition, some of our pilots who are retiring or moving on to other carriers—many who’ve been with Calm Air for years—are being replaced by a much younger generation of pilots, shifting the demographics of our group,” noted Jacobs. “With this in mind, we’re having to change and adapt to how these pilots communicate. It’s a learning process for all involved, and it will take some time. But ultimately, it’s worth the investment.”

This year will be an important one for Calm Air pilots. But as a result of outstanding planning and guidance, it promises to be a springboard to greater things ahead.

AT A GLANCE

PILOTS JOINED ALPA: 1997 (became an ALPA-represented pilot group when the Canadian Air Line Pilots Association [CALPA] merged with ALPA)
NUMBER OF PILOTS: 80+
PILOT BASES: Thompson and Winnipeg, Man.
HEADQUARTERS: Winnipeg, Man.
OPERATIONS: Scheduled passenger and cargo service throughout northern Manitoba and Nunavut, including destinations along the western shore of Hudson Bay and into the high Arctic
FLEET: 12 ATRs—7 ATR 42s (1 freighter and 6 cargo/passenger combis), and 5 ATR 72s (2 freighters)

“Working closely with ALPA’s Canada Board officers, developing a game plan with our ALPA staff members, and eventually using interest-based negotiations, we’ll be well prepared to address our pilots’ concerns and goals during our upcoming negotiations.”

Top: Calm Air Master Executive Council officers and representatives, negotiators, and ALPA staff engage in strategic planning in Winnipeg, Man., in May 2017.
Canadian North
Going Beyond Expectations

BY CHRISTOPHER FREEZE, SENIOR AVIATION TECHNICAL WRITER

At the end of 2016, the Canadian North pilots began negotiating with management for a new contract. Due to a downturn in work caused by a drop in oil prices that adversely affected the airline’s charter operations, the stage was set for a difficult negotiation.

But just four months later after a series of discussions, the pilots and management reached a tentative agreement in late March 2017. With a small pilot group spread throughout western Canada, the Master Executive Council (MEC) successfully leveraged new technologies to inform the pilots about the agreement by adding a live-streaming component to its road shows for pilots unable to attend in person.

The online events were popular and effective in bringing the message to pilots wherever they found themselves.

In early April, 76 percent of the Canadian North pilots who cast ballots voted in favour of the agreement, resulting in the ratification of Collective Agreement 5. The five-year deal includes pay rate increases; wage increase triggers in years three, four, and five; and provides language clarifications and cleanup.

“We were very pleased with the results of the ballot and the job security this labour agreement provides,” said Capt. Bill Rodgers, the pilots’ MEC chairman, “and we believe this five-year deal will improve the company’s chances of securing future charter contracts.”

Over the course of the five years, the agreement includes 11.5 percent pay increases for B-737 first officers and 8 percent increase for Dash 8 first officers. Captains receive a modest increase during the first two years, followed by a prorated salary adjustment payment per year for the final three years. The deal also includes potential wage increases in each of the final three years of the agreement based on the company’s contracts with charter clients.

In May, Canadian North was notified that its code-share agreement with First Air would be terminated. Shortly thereafter, the company announced an expansion of its flight schedule to include more regularly scheduled flights in both the western and eastern Arctic. Canadian North currently services 16 destinations in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut via the southern gateways of Edmonton, Alb., and Ottawa, Ont.

In response to the devastating autumn hurricanes that swept through the Caribbean, Canadian North volunteered a B-737-200 combi to help with relief operation in the U.S. Virgin Islands and Puerto Rico.

“After the outpouring of assistance we saw in the wake of last year’s Fort McMurray fires, it was only natural that we step up and lend a hand to those in need—even those thousands of miles away,” said F/O Brenen Sorokan, the pilots’ MEC vice chairman. The relief effort was featured heavily on Canadian North’s social media accounts.

In an effort to enhance member communications, the MEC surveyed the pilots in late 2017 to assess the best ways to deliver time-sensitive information to the pilot group. The survey results clearly indicated that it was time for the MEC to create a Facebook page, which the MEC launched in December 2017 with the help of ALPA’s Communications Department.

The MEC began the new year conducting strategic planning to help focus its goals and objectives for 2018. “With a new contract and a positive outlook for the economy and the industry, the future appears bright for Canadian North pilots,” Rodgers said.
The pilots of CommutAir, who had their fair share of ups and downs in 2017, are taking on the new year flying an all-jet fleet. “It’s been a busy time for CommutAir. Our expansion is finally well under way after a great deal of struggle early in 2017,” said Capt. Earl Blowers, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman.

The last scheduled Dash 8 flight out of Newark, N.J., occurred in late 2017, and the company plans to retire the aircraft from the CommutAir fleet in early January 2018, instead of the originally planned 2019. This change moves the airline to an all-jet fleet.

In October 2017, the MEC and CommutAir management signed a letter of agreement (LOA) that provides an extended compensation and a retention bonus for pilots. With the new agreement in place, CommutAir should be able to attract new pilots and retain those who are currently on the property. Among other benefits, first officers with one year of service will be paid Dash 8 captain rates. Dash 8 captains will receive jet captain rates, downgraded pilots will be pay protected, and all captains will receive a retention bonus totaling more than $10,000 over two years.

The pilots also recently maintained an adjusted controllable completion factor of 100 percent for October 2017. “According to management, it’s the first time that’s happened for CommutAir in more than a decade, which shows the progress we’ve made in the company’s expansion,” noted Blowers. “It indicates how far we’ve come since early 2017 when we were meeting very few of the performance metrics established by United Airlines,” he added.

The pilot group is also seeking quality-of-life improvements that don’t involve direct compensation. “It’s difficult getting management to understand the need for quality-of-life improvements. Money is important, but going to work to earn it shouldn’t have to be a challenge,” Blowers acknowledged.

Related projects on the horizon include a FOQA program, which is a result of the five-year capacity purchase agreement with United Airlines to operate a fleet of Embraer 145 Regional Jets. Additionally, the pilot group hopes to trade in paper charts and cases for electronic flight bags in 2018. “The 145s took a great deal of resources over the past two years, and the electronic flight bags kept getting pushed back. We’re really excited to make the transition,” said Blowers.

Despite the challenges facing all FFD carriers, the CommutAir pilots look forward to continued growth and improvements in the upcoming year. “We anticipate that 2018 will be a busy year for the pilots and the airline,” observed Blowers. ©

CommutAir pilot Hannah Speidel on her last Dash 8 flight as a first officer before beginning jet training and captain upgrade.

**CommutAir**

**Growing Gains for the United Regional Carrier**

By Capt. Andrew Luptak (CommutAir), Master Executive Council Communications Chairman, and Katy Adams, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

**At a Glance**

- **PILOTS JOINED ALPA:** 2008
- **NUMBER OF PILOTS:** 278
- **PILOT BASES:** Newark, N.J., and Washington Dulles, Va.
- **HEADQUARTERS:** South Burlington, Vt.
- **DESTINATIONS:** CommutAir flies to more than 30 cities in the Midwest, Northeast, and Canada
- **FLEET:** 23 Embraer ERJ 145s
Once a wholly Midwestern operation, Compass Airlines moved west in 2017 to better serve its mainline partners and seek new opportunities in the booming West Coast airline market.

The carrier that was created a decade ago to feed passengers to Northwest Airlines hubs in Minnesota, Michigan, and Tennessee closed its Minneapolis, Minn., domicile in December 2017 and added a new pilot base in Phoenix, Ariz., to its existing Los Angeles, Calif., and Seattle, Wash., domiciles the same month, completing its transformation to a West Coast feeder for Delta and American Airlines, according to Capt. Nik Wagenknecht, the Compass pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman.

“We fly almost exclusively in the western half of the country, even though our MEC office and corporate headquarters are still based in Minneapolis. It’s been a transition for everyone,” said Wagenknecht.

The airline was originally created more than a decade ago as a wholly owned subsidiary of Northwest Airlines, and for the first three years of its existence the pilots were represented by first the Northwest MEC and then the Delta Air Lines MEC. Compass became a stand-alone MEC in 2010.

Compass became a Delta Connection carrier after the 2008 merger of Delta and Northwest. Many of the pilots originally hired by Compass are now working for Delta thanks to a former flow-through agreement. Compass has been owned by Trans States Holdings since 2010.

Like many fee-for-departure carriers, the Compass MEC is challenged by the constant transition of experienced volunteers and elected representatives who are leaving the airline to further their careers.

“It’s a good problem to have because it’s an indication of the strong pilot-hiring market, but the situation makes it difficult to keep our committees fully staffed,” Wagenknecht noted. “We’ve tried to address this by holding regular committee summits each year so that vice chairs and other committee volunteers are trained and ready to step up when their colleagues move on.”

The MEC also created an executive administrator position in 2016 to assist the MEC with its ever-increasing workload.

Compass was one of the first fee-for-departure carriers to use first-year pay incentives to attract new-hire pilots to the airline. The company had unilaterally implemented bonuses, which the MEC challenged. Through a settlement agreement with the pilots, the company increased pay for first-year first officers last year and had the option to further increase pay, with a trigger to increase the entire first officer pay scale.

Little more than a year later, the benefit of the initial raises have proven to be short-lived. In October 2017, the company further increased the rates to the maximum allowed by the agreement, triggering increases for the rest of the first officer pay scale while leaving captain rates unchanged. In spite of the first officer pay increases, the airline is falling behind its peers like Delta Connection carrier Endeavor Air and is struggling to recruit new hires as a consequence.

Even more worrisome, management continues to unilaterally change compensation and work conditions with no input from the pilots, including new first-year pilot payments; a vacation buyback program in which pilots voluntarily give up their vacation at the pay rate of 125 percent, which still resulted in the cancellation of December 2017 vacations; an announced right-seat captain qualification program; and implementing scheduling and position bidding programs that don’t comply with the contract.

“The pilots and the company have scheduled a mediation session in late January to begin addressing the growing number of grievances and other problems,” said Wagenknecht. “The company has indicated it wants to work together with the pilots to achieve mutually beneficial resolutions, and we hope it will.”

“It’s a good problem to have because it’s an indication of the strong pilot-hiring market, but the situation makes it difficult to keep our committees fully staffed.”
BUILDING A FOUNDATION
BY KELLY REGUS, ALPA SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

For the Delta Master Executive Council (MEC), 2017 was a year of foundation building for Contract 2019 negotiations. The Delta Pilot Network and Membership Committees were retooled to focus on pilot engagement and unification. The Negotiating, Scope Compliance, and Strategic Planning Committees focused on joint ventures and partnerships, and the Central Air Safety Committee continued its safety vigilance.

Delta Air Lines continues to demonstrate positive profit and growth trends. The business model is one of vigorous global growth including joint ventures, partial ownerships, and other partnerships. Early projections for 2018 are of continued profitability, with a slight improvement over 2017 margins.

Delta hired more than 1,000 pilots in 2017. Since the airline resumed hiring in 2014, more than 4,000 pilots have joined the seniority list. Newly hired pilots range in age from 23 to 56 years old, and civilian pilots (56 percent) outnumber military pilots (44 percent)

Assuming modest growth and escalating retirements, analysis suggests Delta must hire more than 1,000 pilots annually. Approximately 400 pilots per year are scheduled to retire in 2018 and 2019—and that number quickly escalates, with 6,200 scheduled retirements expected over the next decade.

To engage and unify the diverse and growing pilot group, the Delta Pilot Network (DPN) was retooled in 2017, with a focus on pilot unity, engagement, and support. The committee includes more than 25 first-time ALPA volunteers with an average longevity of less than eight years at Delta. The DPN effectively serves as an entrance point for newer pilots into MEC service. The DPN also hosts pilot unity-building events around the Delta system where pilots and their families can interact with their union representatives; encourages pilot engagement with online resources, including blog.deltamec.org, and activates call centers after natural disasters have occurred.

Delta is part of a profit-loss-sharing agreement (joint venture) with Air France–KLM–Alitalia, Virgin Atlantic, Aeroméxico, and Virgin Australia. The airline has plans to enter into an agreement with Korean Airlines and joint ventures with Air France–KLM–Alitalia, Virgin Atlantic, and Virgin Australia and are currently negotiating terms for the Aeroméxico joint venture production balance.

As Delta’s business model changes, the MEC’s goal remains to protect Delta pilot flying and retain a balanced share of any partnership flying. In addition to protecting the pilots’ careers, the MEC remains committed to airline safety. In 2017, Capt. Scott Hammond, the pilots’ Central Air Safety Committee chairman, and F/O Matt Clark, the Aviation Security Committee chairman, were awarded presidential citations at ALPA’s Air Safety Forum (see “ALPA Honors Its Own,” August 2017) for their relentless work in advancing ALPA’s safety and security goals.

At the end of 2017, Delta Air Lines bid farewell to the iconic B-747 and brought new aircraft types to the fleet, including the Airbus 350, which began revenue flights late last year.

The MEC committee structure is robust, the pilots are engaged, and Delta is projecting record growth. The future bodes well for Delta Air Lines pilots.

“Delta hired more than 1,000 pilots in 2017. Since the airline resumed hiring in 2014, more than 4,000 pilots have joined the seniority list. Newly hired pilots range in age from 23 to 56 years old, and civilian pilots (56 percent) outnumber military pilots (44 percent).”

Balance for each joint venture.

If an agreement can’t be reached, the Delta pilot working agreement provides for base protections. To date, the pilots have succeeded in reaching an agreement with Delta management regarding Air France–KLM–Alitalia, Virgin Atlantic, and Virgin Australia and are currently negotiating terms for the Aeroméxico joint venture production balance.

As Delta’s business model changes, the MEC must hire more than 1,000 pilots annually. Approximately 400 pilots per year are scheduled to retire in 2018 and 2019—and that number quickly escalates, with 6,200 scheduled retirements expected over the next decade.

To engage and unify the diverse and growing pilot group, the Delta Pilot Network (DPN) was retooled in 2017, with a focus on pilot unity, engagement, and support. The committee includes more than 25 first-time ALPA volunteers with an average longevity of less than eight years at Delta. The DPN effectively serves as an entrance point for newer pilots into MEC service. The DPN also hosts pilot unity-building events around the Delta system where pilots and their families can interact with their union representatives; encourages pilot engagement with online resources, including blog.deltamec.org, and activates call centers after natural disasters have occurred.

Delta is part of a profit-loss-sharing agreement (joint venture) with Air France–KLM–Alitalia, Virgin Atlantic, Aeroméxico, and Virgin Australia. The airline has plans to enter into an agreement with Korean Airlines and joint ventures with Air France–KLM–Alitalia, Virgin Atlantic, and Virgin Australia and are currently negotiating terms for the Aeroméxico joint venture production balance.

As Delta’s business model changes, the MEC’s goal remains to protect Delta pilot flying and retain a balanced share of any partnership flying.

In addition to protecting the pilots’ careers, the MEC remains committed to airline safety. In 2017, Capt. Scott Hammond, the pilots’ Central Air Safety Committee chairman, and F/O Matt Clark, the Aviation Security Committee chairman, were awarded presidential citations at ALPA’s Air Safety Forum (see “ALPA Honors Its Own,” August 2017) for their relentless work in advancing ALPA’s safety and security goals.

At the end of 2017, Delta Air Lines bid farewell to the iconic B-747 and brought new aircraft types to the fleet, including the Airbus 350, which began revenue flights late last year.

The MEC committee structure is robust, the pilots are engaged, and Delta is projecting record growth. The future bodes well for Delta Air Lines pilots.

In 2017, Delta retired the iconic B-747 from its fleet.

AT A GLANCE

NUMBER OF PILOTS: 14,375

JOINT VENTURES AND ALLIANCES: SkyTeam Alliance and joint ventures with Air France–KLM–Alitalia, Virgin Australia, Virgin Atlantic, and Aeroméxico

OPERATIONS: 334 destinations in 62 countries on six continents

PILOT BASES: Atlanta, Ga.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Detroit, Mich.; Los Angeles, Calif.; Minneapolis–St. Paul, Minn.; New York City, N.Y.; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Seattle, Wash.


HEADQUARTERS: Atlanta, Ga.

FLEET: More than 800 mainline airplanes including A319s, A320s, A321s, A330s, B-717s, B-737s, B-757s, B-767s, B-777s, MD-88s, and MD-90s
ENCORE
NOW IT’S TIME FOR THE ENCORE

By Katy Adams, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

ALPA’s organizing efforts in Canada were strong in 2017, and WestJet Encore was the third Canadian pilot group to seek ALPA representation. The pilots joined the Association in November, following the path of fellow Canadian carriers Air Georgian and WestJet Airlines, Encore’s own sister company, earlier in the year.

The journey began over the summer when a group of Encore pilot representatives met with ALPA to discuss union representation. After securing contact information and building a strong Organizing Committee, the pilots collected membership cards from a majority of pilots in one of the fastest Canadian organizing drives in ALPA history.

“Encore pilots made it clear that they wanted a legally recognized trade union representing us and that that union be ALPA, the world’s largest pilots’ union, to help us work with management to negotiate and deliver our first collective agreement under the Canada Labour Code,” said F/O Ryan Petrie, the pilot group’s interim Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman.

On November 1, ALPA filed an application with the Canada Industrial Relations Board (CIRB). The Encore pilot group—armed with membership cards and newly passed legislation governing union organizing (Bill C-4)—was notified approximately four weeks later on November 29 that the CIRB completed its investigation and authorized ALPA as the pilots’ bargaining representative.

“This was the announcement we were waiting for,” noted Petrie. “Encore pilots have played a vital role in the success of our company, and we look forward to building our relationship with management, overcoming the growing pains of being certified, and putting ALPA’s abundant resources to use so that we gain a stronger voice in the decisions that impact our careers and collective future.”

In December, the pilots’ temporary Local Executive Council representatives were introduced to ALPA staff to begin building relationships and elected temporary MEC officers at their first meeting in Ottawa, Ont. Elected along with Petrie were Capt. Robert Bergeron as MEC vice chairman and Capt. Ted Hebert as MEC secretary-treasurer. The officers immediately began their temporary terms. They spent the remainder of December membership building and establishing their internal union structure.

“Our immediate goal for 2018 is increasing our membership and securing its involvement, followed by our longer-term goal for the year of securing a collective agreement that meets the needs of our pilots,” Petrie observed. “It’s the view of the pilots who have stepped up to serve as union volunteers that we have a responsibility to create a better future for all Encore pilots, which we’ll achieve through a well-functioning MEC and committee structure and securing our first collective agreement.”

The MEC undoubtedly has a busy year ahead, and the real work is just beginning. At the end of 2017, ALPA sent WestJet Encore a notice to bargain, which triggers a duty for both the labour group and the employer to schedule bargaining meetings under the Canada Labour Code.

“In 2018, we hope to make solid progress toward a contract. We also hope that our company’s two new endeavours—WestJet Link and Swoop—will be as profitable and successful as the company forecasts but not by degrading our job security or working conditions,” said Petrie.

Immediately on the horizon are elections for permanent MEC representatives, which will be held in early 2018.

AT A GLANCE

PILOTS JOINED ALPA: 2017
NUMBER OF PILOTS: Nearly 500
HEADQUARTERS: Calgary, Alb.
PILOT BASES: Calgary, Alb., and Toronto, Ont.
DESTINATIONS: 37
FLEET: 41 Bombardier Q400 NextGens

“Encore pilots made it clear that they wanted a legally recognized trade union representing us and that that union be ALPA, the world’s largest pilots’ union, to help us work with management to negotiate and deliver our first collective agreement under the Canada Labour Code.”
ENDEAVOR AIR
PILOTS RAISE THE BAR WITH UNPRECEDENTED GAINS
BY KIMBERLY SEITZ, ALPA SENIOR MEC COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

In late November 2017, the Endeavor Air pilots overwhelmingly ratified an unmatched contract modification and extension deal that resulted from one year of interim negotiations. Of the pilots who voted, 86 percent voted in favor of the agreement, which took effect January 1 and extends the existing contract through Jan. 1, 2024.

“TThis agreement is the culmination of a strategic initiative to take advantage of a positive bargaining cycle,” said Capt. Jim Johnson, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. The new wage rates—unprecedented in the fee-for-departure industry—convert what were temporary retention bonuses into permanent wage scales that greatly exceed industry-average rates.

“Under this agreement, our first officers will see hourly rates 40 to 50 percent above industry average, and the majority of our captain wage rates will be 20 to 25 percent above industry average,” noted Johnson. The conversion of temporary retention bonuses into permanent wage scales sets a new bar for 50- to 76-seat jet operators. Putting the retention dollars into the wage scales increases eligible 401(k) deferrals; ensures that sick, vacation, and training are paid at the higher rate; and greatly increases the W-2 earnings of pilots who pick up open time, since all open time is paid at a premium of at least 150 percent.

The agreement doesn’t stop at wages. It also includes dramatically improved 401(k) company-matching contributions and per diem, sick accrual, and reserve quality-of-life improvements, including 12 days off per month and the restoration of long-call reserve.

“Given that we’re currently experiencing the most favorable financial environment the airlines have ever seen, we wanted to cement favorable terms in our contract now. If there’s a downturn, negotiating this type of deal would become much more challenging,” Johnson said.

While Endeavor Air continues to fill its new-hire classes with 45–60 pilots per month, the new deal limits management’s ability to offer additional bonuses to new hires. The new-hire bonus may be increased by $10,000, but beyond that, the pilots must consent to any change. “It was important to retain contractual control over new hire bonuses, because we must ensure that any future increases include gains for our existing pilots as well,” observed Johnson. “We couldn’t do that without a contract provision like the one we achieved.”

In addition, a separate letter of agreement (LOA)—the “Bridge Agreement,” which was signed by Delta Air Lines and Endeavor—increases the fleet commitment to 109 76-seat aircraft (up from 81) and extends the fleet commitment by two years following the amendable date to Jan. 1, 2026.

In 2017, the MEC also reopened its pilot base in Atlanta, Ga., and began transitioning pilots to accommodate delivery of 31 CRJ700s and -900s by June 2018, bringing Endeavor’s total fleet to 154 aircraft by summer.

The MEC has negotiated and ratified 60 LOAs that cover a wide variety of initiatives to increase pay and improve quality of life since the airline exited bankruptcy in 2013, and the MEC will continue to focus on additional initiatives in 2018 that will benefit the pilots, including ones pertaining to career progression. Although Endeavor Air pilots have a guaranteed interview program with Delta, the MEC is advocating for a more robust and contractual program for career progression.

“When Delta commits that it won’t offer career progression at any carrier that is more favorable than the terms at Endeavor, we’ll still continue to advocate for a guaranteed and contractual pathway to a career at Delta for all of our pilots,” Johnson said.

Below: The Endeavor Air Master Executive Council and Negotiating Committee conduct a road show in Detroit, Mich., to discuss the tentative agreement with the pilots prior to the ratification ballot.
Envoy Air pilots have strived to regain their footing after a one-two punch of bankruptcy and post-bankruptcy economic concessions and have now positioned themselves for growth and additional gains in 2018—thanks to hard work and positive trends in the fee-for-departure industry.

“Envoy is hiring 60 to 80 pilots per month on average and even had a record-breaking 100 pilots in two recent months,” said Capt. Sam Pool, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman, “but there’s still more to be done now that the Endeavor Air pilots have substantially raised the bar with their recent contract.”

Pool cited Envoy’s wide geographic footprint, quick upgrade times, and favorable flow agreement with American Airlines (part of parent company AAG) as key enticers for new hires—who can upgrade from first officer to captain in as little as 18 months. Roughly 25 senior captains flow to American Airlines each month. New hires who meet federal aviation regulation requirements via previous Part 121 experience can expect even quicker upgrades.

Other improvements include a domicile procedures letter of agreement (LOA) that encourages the company to open domiciles it might not otherwise open, as well as letting new-hire pilots with previous Part 121 experience have priority choice of initial domiciles and equipment.

In addition, the MEC and management worked jointly to develop the logistics to accommodate the airline’s pilot training at a facility in Morlaix, France, which Pool credits with making the overseas training appealing to the pilots and contributing to the successful training completion rates. A newly acquired simulator will also be put on line in the first quarter of 2018, which will provide additional bandwidth for training.

“We’re constantly pushing for pilot-centric improvements, but of course there is more work that needs to be done,” observed Pool. “That said, it’s a good time to be an Envoy pilot.”

And while the future of Envoy’s CRJ fleet is still being determined, Pool notes that Envoy pilots recently learned that the airline would be reactivating all of the stored E140s and would also be receiving 10 more Embraer 175s starting in 2018, “which is a clear indicator that AAG trusts Envoy’s ability to get the job done.”

In other positive news, the MEC grew in 2017 as two former domiciles—New York City, N.Y. (La Guardia Airport and John F. Kennedy International Airport) and Miami, Fla.—were reopened. And the company is eyeing other major markets that could benefit from a crew base enabled by the domicile procedures LOA. With New York City and Miami, the MEC also increased the number of status representatives to 10, including the reps from the training facility in Dallas, Tex.

According to Pool, Envoy management is satisfied with the status quo that, for the moment, continues to bring new hires to Envoy, but he insists the marketplace for new hires won’t tolerate stagnation or the status quo for long. He acknowledged that negotiations are needed to make additional changes to the pilots’ contract that enhance quality of life, especially for reserve pilots. “It’s one thing to get pilots in the door with fast-cash enticements, it’s another to have the complete package: good, durable economics; good working conditions; and good quality of life. That’s my goal, and the goal of the MEC.”

“Envoy is hiring 60 to 80 pilots per month on average and even had a record-breaking 100 pilots in two recent months.”
For the last few years, ExpressJet pilots have endured rather uncertain times. A sluggish merger, increased industry competition, and significant fleet and staffing reductions fueled by high pilot attrition have left the ExpressJet Master Executive Council (MEC) and ExpressJet pilots wondering what the future of their airline will look like. Although several major events in 2017 made that future a bit clearer, the ExpressJet MEC and its pilot group continue to proceed with caution.

For the ExpressJet MEC, 2017 began quietly with the group operating separately from merger partner Atlantic Southeast Airlines under a short-term contract extension signed in early 2016. Although temporarily relieved of the requirement to conduct joint negotiations, both ExpressJet and Atlantic Southeast MEC leaders spent much of the year working closely together to prepare for the groups’ upcoming challenges, particularly staffing.

As part of parent company SkyWest, Inc.’s financial strategy, ExpressJet released nearly 70 aircraft in 2017 that were operating under unprofitable contracts with major partner United Airlines. This large reduction was accompanied by massive pilot attrition, keeping staffing roughly at required levels throughout the year. Any plateau or increase in the fleet size, however, was expected to create a unique challenge for the company.

The ExpressJet MEC received some help in June when the company announced signing and retention bonuses for ExpressJet pilots. Capt. John Miclau, the ExpressJet MEC chairman, was quick to point out that this was just the first piece of a multipart solution that would be required to make ExpressJet a viable and attractive workplace for the pilot group moving forward.

“Although finances play a very important role in attracting and retaining quality pilots, it’s only one piece of the puzzle,” said Miclau. “Our airline desperately needed a defined, long-term future and a stable fleet plan in order to succeed.”

ExpressJet’s future, and the pilot groups’ long-delayed merger, gained some more definition in August, when the company announced that it had signed a new, profitable five-year capacity purchase agreement with United to fly as many as 126 ERJ 145s, an increase from the current fleet size. This announcement, however, also came with the news that Atlantic Southeast’s contract with Delta Air Lines would terminate by the end of 2018. To preserve as many Atlantic Southeast jobs as possible while also creating a pool of pilots to staff the new United agreement, the ExpressJet and Atlantic Southeast MECs negotiated and implemented an integrated pilot seniority list, officially completing the merger of the two pilot groups that began in 2010.

“History will show this as a tale of two pilot groups…operated by a company that couldn’t make future plans because of the instability of the pilot labor supply,” said Capt. Dave Allen, the former ExpressJet MEC chairman, and Capt. Chromer Smith, the Atlantic Southeast MEC chairman, in a joint statement to their pilot groups following the announcement.

“Our two pilot groups have now become lifeboats for each other. Lashed together, we will be a pilot force 2,100 strong operated by a company that now has the ability to look into the future to gain more flying for all of us.”

Legacy Atlantic Southeast CRJ pilots flying in the Delta operation began training on the ERJ 145 for United operations in November. The transfer will continue throughout 2018 until the Delta operation is completely closed.

“The turn of events we saw in 2017 is clearly not part of the best-case scenario any ExpressJet pilot had hoped for,” explained Miclau. “However, both the Atlantic Southeast and ExpressJet MECs are committed to working to best protect our pilots’ careers as ExpressJet looks to the future.”

“Our two pilot groups have now become lifeboats for each other. Lashed together, we will be a pilot force 2,100 strong operated by a company that now has the ability to look into the future to gain more flying for all of us.”
Last year was marked by a strengthening of the Master Executive Council (MEC) committee structure through recruiting and training new volunteers, a comprehensive assessment of the FedEx pilots’ defined-benefit plan, a welcoming of new-hire pilots, and the creation of a new program geared toward female pilots.

In addition to the very important constants of contract enforcement and participation in collaborative safety programs like ASAP and FOQA, the MEC came into 2017 knowing that retirement needed immediate attention. “We also saw the need to meet new hires at the door. And as we will see a significant number of retirements in the near future, it’s important to bring a new generation of volunteers into our committee structure,” said Capt. Chuck Dyer, the pilots’ MEC chairman.

Although we’re always looking for volunteers, the influx of new pilots and the retirement of experienced volunteers over the next several years makes it even more of a priority to bolster our volunteer group,” acknowledged Capt. John Cardaci, the MEC vice chairman. “And we’re encouraged by the response we’ve received. In fact, one of the new volunteers immediately played a critical role in developing a new program that focuses on female pilots.”

Early in the year, the MEC also authorized the Negotiating Committee to begin consulting with various retirement-industry experts to identify potentially viable improvements that would benefit everyone. “Priority one is to bring our pilots a plan that improves our families’ retirements and ultimately unites our crew force,” said Dyer. After much debate and thorough research, the MEC made a unanimous decision to focus on the variable-benefit plan model and immediately began an education campaign.

By early fall, the MEC met with management to introduce the variable-benefit plan concept. Since then, the MEC’s Negotiating Committee has been busy providing education material to the crew force. “We recognized the challenge associated with making any change to our retirement, and we know how important it is to start the education process sooner rather than later,” said Capt. Pat May, the pilot’s Negotiating Committee chairman. “We’re beginning at square one and will build upon that information—seeking feedback and encouraging questions throughout the process,” he added.

More than 300 pilots started their FedEx career in 2017, and the MEC leaders are placing a high priority on connecting that career to ALPA. “Our Membership Committee did an outstanding job of making sure that ALPA was visible to our new hires from the outset. It’s vitally important that our pilots are connected to their union from the very start of their careers,” Dyer noted.

As the MEC leaders look toward 2018, they remain committed to building on past successes. “Our work on the retirement project will continue. Safety- and security-based collaborations with management should progress as well,” said Dyer. “At the same time, enforcement of our agreement remains paramount. Our pilots are essential to that daily effort, and we thank them for what they do for each other every day.”

The 4,613 FedEx Express pilots are spread across the globe, with eight councils located in four domiciles as well as pilots assigned to foreign duty in Hong Kong and Cologne, Germany. With more than 375 airports served worldwide, the airline has an extensive and varied fleet. FedEx delivers freight daily to more than 220 countries and territories, including every address in the United States.
FIRST AIR
CHANGE BRINGS OPPORTUNITY

BY KATY ADAMS, ALPA SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

First Air kicked off 2017 with a company rebranding initiative that culminated in October with the launch of a new livery for the aircraft and a new company logo and colors. To date, two aircraft have been repainted in the new livery, and the company plans to complete the entire fleet transition within the next two years.

The First Air Master Executive Council (MEC) had a productive 2017, holding MEC meetings in Yellowknife, N.W.T., in the spring and Ottawa, Ont., in the fall. “These meetings were extremely constructive, and in the fall the MEC created and finalized our first strategic plan for the pilot group,” said F/O Charlene Hudy, the pilot group’s MEC chair.

First Air’s new look isn’t the only change at the company. Murray Balzer became the new director of flight operations and participated in the MEC’s fall meeting in Ottawa. In November, First Air also hired one of its pilots, F/O Chris Duggan, as the manager of flight safety. “The MEC is confident that we can work with Murray and Chris to continue to build on the positive safety culture at First Air. We’ve been actively engaging our new management and building a dialogue in an effort to continue the working relationship the union has built with the company,” Hudy noted.

Moving forward with that relationship, the MEC plans to address scheduling for rotational ATR pilots with management, and the pilots’ Negotiating and Scheduling Committees have been working diligently to find a solution to scheduling issues.

Pilot retention and engagement became challenging at First Air this past year. The MEC gathered information from pilots upon their departure from the airline in an exit poll to get a better understanding of the issue. As the leader of the pilot group, Hudy is particularly concerned with losing valuable union volunteers. “Typically when someone leaves, it creates a vacancy on a committee,” Hudy pointed out. “Therefore the MEC is focusing on attracting new volunteers and ensuring that we always have potential members being trained to fill open positions as they arise. Our union is only as strong as the volunteers; and while we have numerous people willing to serve and make a difference, our goal for 2018 is to actively engage new hires so that they’re aware of all the ALPA volunteer opportunities.”

While union representatives have been busy welcoming new hires to ALPA and presenting at all the new-hire ground school classes, the MEC struggles with continued pilot engagement. “We continue to communicate with our pilots through biweekly e-mail updates and face-to-face conversations at our meetings, but it’s difficult to keep members engaged,” acknowledged Hudy.

Over the summer, the MEC conducted an all-pilot survey to gauge the pilots’ needs and desires for upcoming negotiations. Meanwhile F/O Steve Bard, the MEC vice chair, worked with ALPA’s Communications Department to develop a new website for the MEC, which is in the works and will launch soon. The MEC is also revamping its logo to coincide with the new First Air colors.

“With change, there’s opportunity,” said Hudy, “and through volunteer engagement and the active strengthening of our union committees, I’m confident we can continue to strongly advocate for the concerns of the First Air pilot group.”

AT A GLANCE

NUMBER OF PILOTS: 120
(including 16 on furlough)
HEADQUARTERS: Kanata, Ont.
PILOT BASES: Ottawa, Ont.; Yellowknife, N.W.T.; and Iqaluit, N.U.
OPERATIONS: First Air operates services to 34 communities in Nunavut, Nunavik, and the Northwest Territories
FLEET: 4 B-737-400s (3 combi, 1 passenger), 7 ATR 42-300s, and 6 ATR 42-500s

“Typically when someone leaves, it creates a vacancy on a committee. Therefore the MEC is focusing on attracting new volunteers and ensuring that we always have potential members being trained to fill open positions as they arise.”

LEFT: F/O Charlene Hudy, the pilots’ Master Executive Council chair, right, leads a discussion at the pilot group’s MEC meeting in Ottawa, Ont.
PILOT GROUP PROFILES

FRONTIER
OUT IN THE COLD

BY RUSTY AYERS, ALPA SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

As 2017 came to a close, the almost 1,200 pilots of Frontier Airlines appeared to be on a collision course with their owners and management—the same ownership team that forced the Spirit Airlines pilots into a five-day strike in 2010.

After more than 18 months of bargaining, the Frontier pilots are feeling left out in the cold, with the company still attempting to wrest contract concessions from a pilot group that is already the lowest-paid in North America and falling further behind with every new pilot agreement.

On average, Frontier pilots earn 40 percent less than pilots flying similar Airbus or Boeing narrowbody airplanes. Their company also has the lowest retirement plan contribution of any major U.S. airline.

"While Frontier continues to upstream hundreds of millions of dollars in profits to its private shareholders and to award substantial management bonuses, it refuses to unwind the concessions pilots have made or offer pay in line with that of our peers," said Capt. Tracy Smith, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. "The company’s goal seems to be to keep our pay as low as it can, for as long as it can. That is intolerable to us."

At year's end, the Frontier MEC was planning to solicit help from the National Mediation Board (NMB) to move the stalled negotiations forward.

"We’re making our case to the NMB that further mediation would not be helpful. We believe it’s time for the government to release us from mediation, proffer arbitration, and then allow us to enter a 30-day cooling-off period," Smith observed.

Frontier pilots won an arbitration case last summer over the company’s refusal to engage in good-faith bargaining pursuant to a concessionary agreement the pilots approved in 2011. The pilots, who sacrificed $55 million in pay and benefits, expected the company to negotiate new rates when the airline began making double-digit profits in 2015 and 2016.

A neutral arbitrator ruled in favor of the pilots, saying the airline was negotiating in bad faith when it claimed “business conditions” prevented it from raising pilot wages.

Frontier and its majority owner, investment firm Indigo Partners, are among the most difficult management teams in the industry. Indigo chairman Bill Franke has referred to airline passengers as “spoiled brats” who expect mainline amenities even from low-cost airlines, and Frontier executives have openly squabbled with employees and the news media.

The Frontier MEC has been successful in unifying the pilots in opposition to management’s stall tactics. A strike authorization vote achieved 100 percent approval from the pilots, and the group held massive informational pickets at Denver International Airport and in downtown Denver, Colo., last April and December. Those events attracted more than 300 pilots at each picket, and a “flash picket” outside Frontier headquarters during the airline’s Board of Directors meeting was also a success. Social media and paid advertising campaigns featuring hawks, bears, owls, and other animals in a nod to the airline’s distinctive livery have attracted tens of thousands of views, likes, and shares.

Meanwhile, the company has announced bold plans to more than triple the size of the airline, including placing orders for $19 billion worth of new Airbus airplanes. However, plans to take Frontier public stalled in 2017, and pilot leaders question how the airline will attract new hires in light of their industry-low pay rates.

“If our owners can pay market rates for aircraft, they need to accept that they’re going to have to pay market rates for pilots, too,” said Smith. “Frontier’s growth plans won’t get off the ground until we get a new contract with Industry-standard pay.”

While Frontier continues to upstream hundreds of millions of dollars in profits to its private shareholders and to award substantial management bonuses, it refuses to unwind the concessions pilots have made or offer pay in line with that of our peers.”
The pilots of Hawaiian Airlines began 2017 immersed in a fight for a new contract that would give them a fair share of the airline’s record profits. The pilot group had established a strike operations center funded by a $2 million grant from ALPA’s Major Contingency Fund and had held numerous informational picketing events. However the pilots found themselves at a standstill because the National Mediation Board (NMB) had recessed further mediated talks between the pilots and management to consider disposition of the case and had yet to release the pilots into a 30-day cooling-off period.

A major paid social media campaign targeting the company was launched in December 2016 and helped focus attention on the pilots’ fight for a fair contract. Then in early February, after a few weeks of direct talks between the pilots and management, the parties reached a deal. The tentative agreement included pay rates backdated to September 2015 that raised pilot pay from 20 to 45 percent. By the end of the contract in 2022, rates will have increased by 36 to 86 percent depending on an individual pilot’s seat, aircraft type, and length of service.

Of the 97 percent of pilots who voted, 76 percent cast ballots in favor of ratifying the deal, which went into effect on April 1. “With this agreement, Hawaiian pilots have finally achieved pay rates that bring us to parity with the other major carriers we compete with worldwide,” said Capt. Hoon Lee, the MEC chairman. “But we’re hoping that we can work with management to resolve this situation.”

In 2018, Hawaiian is scheduled to receive nine A321s and will have an average of 10 pilots in each month’s new-hire class. The airline will be expanding its network this spring, launching new routes using A321neos while adding flights to destinations already on its route map.

The pilots of Hawaiian Airlines for years have been active in their community. In 2017, the MEC’s Education Committee conducted more than 30 school visits to inspire children to think about career options in aviation. The pilots also volunteer their time and bring gifts to children at the Shriners Children’s Hospital. “After the support we received from the community during the past two difficult years, it’s important for us to show that we value the community and will support it during good and bad times,” said Lee.

The MEC will continue to engage and keep up to date with the pilot group during the coming year through its website and active social media presence on Facebook. “To remain a strong and unified group, we must communicate and stay engaged with our pilots,” Lee observed.

“With this agreement, Hawaiian pilots have finally achieved pay rates that bring us to parity with the other major carriers we compete with worldwide.”
**ISLAND AIR**

**AIRLINE SHUTS DOWN AFTER 37 YEARS**

**BY FANNY OLMO, ALPA COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST**

To say that the past year at Island Air has been tumultuous would be a gross understatement. The airline started 2017 on a positive footing. The pilots and management reached agreements that would allow the company to expand while maintaining necessary revenue. The first of five new Dash 8-Q400s arrived in January. Pilots were being hired to fly those airplanes, and pilots currently on the seniority list were looking forward to upgrades and transitioning from ATR 72s.

However, financial circumstances started to worsen in late spring. “To be successful, the company needed aircraft, pilots trained to fly them, and a revenue stream to pay for it all,” said Capt. Jim Morris, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman, at ALPA’s fall Executive Board meeting. “Unfortunately, since the refleet started, we had at best only two out of three of these items at any given time.”

These problems culminated in a Chapter 11 bankruptcy filing on Oct. 15, 2017. Lack of capital and financial liquidity quickly led from Chapter 11 reorganization to Chapter 7 liquidation, forcing the airline to officially shut its doors on November 10. To this date, Island Air employees are still unable to transfer their 401(k) accounts, and wages earned in November remain unpaid.

At the beginning of 2017, employees were optimistic regarding plans to potentially double the number of pilots; however, the company began to fall short of revenue expectations. In 2013, the airline went down a similar financial path when software billionaire Larry Ellison bought the airline primarily to shuttle guests from Oahu to his upscale resorts on the island of Lanai. Unfortunately, Ellison’s managers abandoned virtually all of the carrier’s other routes, and the company racked up huge losses.

Former CEO Paul Casey’s plan to replace the airline’s fleet of ATR 72s was abandoned, leaving a pair of new, custom-ordered Bombardier Q400s sitting unused in an Arizona hangar, even though some of the pilots had already been trained to fly them. New management tried to back away from the pay raises it had promised in the letter of agreement that brought the new aircraft onto the property, and grievances started to pile up.

In January 2016, Ellison sold a majority interest in the airline to a group of local investors. Three months later, CEO David Uchiyama was hired and began mending fences with employees. Improved relations with the company led to a contract extension that increased pilot pay while favorably settling all grievances and pending arbitrations. Island Air had the fifth-highest starting pay among the 18 regional carriers operating in the U.S.

Despite Herculean efforts by the pilots and all employees, events outside their control culminated in Island Air closing its doors in November. The last round-trip flight between Oahu and Maui was bittersweet for pilots, friends, and supporters who chose to celebrate Island Air’s 37 years despite the sad circumstances.

Since the announcement of the shutdown, the MEC has remained engaged with ALPA’s national officers and staff to assist pilots. “The one bright aspect to all of this is the overwhelming support we’ve received from ALPA and airlines in getting our pilots placed at other carriers,” said Morris. “In addition, the response to the entire Island Air family by local employers has been amazing, and we’re all extremely grateful.”

In yet another unexpected twist, at the last possible moment Hawaiian Airlines agreed to provide capital to fund the bankruptcy while it negotiated the purchase of the airline. Events continued to unfold as this issue went to press, and the final chapter in this long saga remains unwritten.

ALPA’s Legal Department and Morris, the pilot group’s custodian, are continuing to work to ensure that the pilots receive the wages they earned prior to the airline’s shutdown, pilot placement successes continue, and their interests remain paramount as the potential sale of the airline operating certificate develops.

“At the beginning of 2017, employees were optimistic regarding plans to potentially double the number of pilots; however, the company began to fall short of revenue expectations.”
It was a hallmark year for the pilots of Jazz Aviation, as all ALPA pilots in Canada celebrated the 80th anniversary of the founding of the Canadian Air Line Pilots Association (CALPA), which 60 years later merged with the Air Line Pilots Association to form today’s ALPA, International. Then in 2001, the four Air Canada regional airlines, including Canada Regional Airlines, successfully merged to become the modern Jazz Aviation. Through that merger, the Jazz Master Executive Council (MEC) built a strong relationship with Jazz Aviation management, and in 2015 both parties reached agreement on a stable, long-term collective agreement.

“History is an important part of the decision-making process we use to best represent our pilot group,” said Capt. Claude Buraglia, the Jazz MEC chairman. “We also believe it’s important to pass along some of that history to our newest members. The MEC is a champion of promoting a stable and respectful professional pilot career progression, and 2017 is the year that we began to see the opportunity to move this initiative forward,” Buraglia acknowledged.

One of the pilot group’s biggest accomplishments in the last 12 months came in September when the MEC signed a historic letter of understanding (LOU) with Jazz Aviation management and introduced the concept of “seniority portability” for pilots at Bearskin and Wasaya who are hired through the Jazz Aviation pathways program. “The LOU gives pilots who wish to move to Jazz seniority on our list prior to actually flying for Jazz,” said Buraglia. This seniority is for the purpose of bidding position, schedule, and vacation and protects all pilots at Bearskin and Wasaya who wish to come to Jazz in the future.”

Another high point for the group included an overhaul of its communications strategy. The MEC worked closely with its Communications Committee and ALPA’s Communications Department to help reach its goals and promote pilot engagement. The most notable result of the combined efforts is the new, easy-to-navigate MEC website. And in an effort to engage with the generation known as “millennials,” a private Facebook page for members is in the works. “Communicating with our members has been a constant challenge due to the changing demographic of our pilot group,” explained Buraglia. “There’s a lack of connection to the workplace that we believe is not a localized issue for our airline or our industry. Finding a way to bridge this gap will be a priority for us going forward in 2018.”

Looking ahead, the Jazz MEC hopes to refine its Membership Committee new-hire presentation and work with ALPA national to produce a video explaining the Association’s history in Canada, its organizational structure, and the many benefits the union offers its members.

The MEC will also explore new ways to advance its brand as a stable, respectful, and professional pilot group in the Air Canada Express operation. “We not only believe that this will benefit the pilots we represent, but it will also benefit the other professional pilots within the Air Canada family,” Buraglia noted.

“History is an important part of the decision-making process we use to best represent our pilot group. We also believe it’s important to pass along some of that history to our newest members.”
On Dec. 25, 2017, the JetBlue pilots observed an unwelcomed anniversary. That day marked 1,000 days of bargaining for their first contract since joining ALPA in 2014. For almost three years, the pilot group has been waiting for management to come to the table with an agreement that meets the needs of the more than 3,500 JetBlue pilots, and their patience is running out.

For the past three years, we’ve been asking for market-rate pay scales that put us in line with our peers at other U.S. mainline carriers,” said Capt. Patrick Walsh, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. “Despite the company paying market rate for every other aspect of its operations, from engines to gates, it doesn’t seem to think it has to pay market rate for its pilots—a vital part of JetBlue’s continued success.”

The airline has enjoyed five years of industry-leading profits and has made more than $2.5 billion in profits since the pilots began negotiating. Meanwhile, the pilots lag their peers at comparable airlines. As other groups have seen substantial pay raises over the past three years, JetBlue pilots are still waiting. But they aren’t waiting quietly.

In July 2017, the pilot group held a unity rally in New York, N.Y. Hundreds of pilots listened to Capt. Tim Canoll, ALPA’s president, and Walsh speak, followed by a presentation from the pilots’ Negotiating Committee and ALPA’s Representation Department. Then, led by Capt. Brian Dawson, the pilots’ Strategic Preparedness and Strike Committee (SPSC) chairman, the group received training on how to execute an informational picket.

“We held a very successful event to show management that our pilot group is unified and supports our negotiators,” said Walsh. “We decided a rally, held just a cab ride away from our company headquarters, would get the message across. Our pilots came out in force.”

Afterward, with the help of ALPA’s Communications Department, the JetBlue pilots produced a hard-hitting video with highlights from the rally. Within days of the video being distributed to the pilot group, company management referenced several quotes in the video at a meeting with Walsh. The pilots followed up the New York rally with a Boston, Mass., event in September. Though the venue was different, the result was the same—hundreds of pilots came to show their support for their MEC and Negotiating Committee.

The JetBlue pilots then embarked on a targeted public-awareness campaign, which echoed their message in every JetBlue base across the country using several different platforms from billboards to social media. Beginning in October, billboards went up around John F. Kennedy International and Logan International Airports, with additional billboards strategically placed in Fort Lauderdale and Orlando, Fla., and Long Beach, Calif. The pilot group also purchased full-color ads in The Boston Globe and New York Post.

As the year closed, more actions were ramping up, including an aggressive social media campaign and mobile billboards, as the pilot group continues to exert pressure on management.

“We know we deserve a contract that brings us in line with our peers, one that puts us on the same level in pay and benefits as our peers who are flying the same aircraft and the same routes,” Walsh said. “We know that our company can afford it. The airline has accrued billions of dollars in profits just since we began negotiating more than 1,000 days ago. The only question left is what will it take for this company to give us the contract that we deserve. This pilot group, more than 3,500 strong, isn’t backing down.”

“We held a very successful event to show management that our pilot group is unified and supports our negotiators.”
For more than a year, the Kelowna Flightcraft pilot group has been in ALPA custodianship. A renewed contract with Solar Air Cargo in 2016 allowed KF Aerospace (formerly Kelowna Flightcraft Air Charter Limited) the opportunity to hire new pilots for the first time in many years. This positive news has given the pilots a renewed hope for the success of their airline and for rebuilding their union structure.

The pilot group was placed into custodianship in October 2015 when ALPA’s Executive Council passed a resolution to dissolve Council 212 and put all of the pilots into a single council (Council 206). As the new year begins, the pilot group remains in custodianship; however, elections for new officers are currently under way.

“While I enjoy working with the Kelowna pilots, it’s been my goal to help the pilot group regain its footing and build a strong union structure that will best represent all Kelowna pilots,” said Capt. Dan Adamus (Jazz Aviation), ALPA Canada president and the pilot group’s Master Executive Council (MEC) custodian.

As one of ALPA’s smaller pilot groups and having endured a turbulent last few years, the pilots have faced challenges maintaining elected representatives. However, with the airline’s recent positive news, the pilot group began discussing bringing the MEC out of custodianship. In mid-October, a survey was e-mailed to the pilots, who supported the MEC exiting custodianship. In mid-December, nominations took place.

Once nominations were secured, a representation ballot to elect captain, first officer, and second officer representatives opened in mid-January and was scheduled to close as this issue went to press. Voting to elect the pilots’ chairman, vice chairman, and secretary-treasurer from among those newly elected status reps also opened in mid-January and was scheduled to close approximately a month later. The officers are slated to begin their terms on March 1, 2018, and will have a busy first year. Mid-term contract negotiations are scheduled to open in April 2018 for a collective agreement that runs through March 31, 2020.

As with many Canadian air carriers, Kelowna’s pilots fly diverse operations. The Vancouver, B.C.-based pilots conduct regional flying on behalf of Canada Post and Purolator Courier in British Columbia using Convair 580s, flying postal goods and freight on a limited schedule.

Based in western Canada, KF Aerospace also operates a contract with the U.S. division of Solar Cargo that places two of its McDonnell Douglas DC-10 freighters in Miami, Fla., to operate flights to various cities in South America. Flying anything from fresh flowers and pharmaceuticals to produce and livestock, the airline will see its contract with Solar Cargo come up for renewal at the end of this year.

Looking ahead, the future appears to be brighter for Kelowna pilots. The carrier is actively seeking more opportunities for revenue flying and intends to hire eight to 10 new pilots in the coming year to meet the increased flying demand. The airline’s DC-10 simulator, the only one of its kind operating in North America, is being used by a multitude of pilots, including those not employed by KF Aerospace.

“The pilot group may be small in size, but it certainly has a big heart,” noted Adamus. “Despite the ups and downs of the last few years, the pilots continue to demonstrate their professionalism with the utmost dedication to safety and efficiency.”

**AT A GLANCE**

- **PILOTS JOINED ALPA:** 1997 (became an ALPA-represented pilot group when the Canadian Air Line Pilots Association [CALPA] merged with ALPA)
- **NUMBER OF PILOTS:** 43
- **PILOTS BASES:** Vancouver, B.C., and Toronto, Ont.
- **HEADQUARTERS:** Kelowna, B.C.
- **FLEET:** 3 Convair 580s and 2 McDonnell Douglas DC-10s

*TOP:* From left, Kelowna pilots F/O Sean Whitehead, S/O Daniel Vecchiarelli, and S/O Joshua Petrolo count the nomination ballots at a special meeting conducted in mid-December 2017 in Miami, Fla.

*BRIEF:* A Kelowna DC-10 lands after a cargo flight.
A year that started with pessimism—and included an allocation from ALPA’s Major Contingency Fund, informational picketing, and a lawsuit—ended with optimism. For the first time in almost a decade, the Mesa pilots rang in 2018 with a new agreement.

“We’re pleased with today’s results,” said Capt. Andy Hughes, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman, on July 12, 2017, regarding ratification of the contract. “This agreement delivers improvements in pay, vacation, and retirement, placing us in line with the rest of our peers, and that’s what pattern bargaining is all about.”

After talks had stalled going into 2017, ALPA filed an application in March for mediation services with the National Mediation Board (NMB). “We went into mediation with three key elements,” explained Andrew Shostack, assistant director of ALPA’s Representation Department. “Number one, we had a pared-down list of bargaining objectives. Number two, we had clear direction from the pilots, along with their and the MEC’s unwavering support. And number three, we had parties—on both sides of the table—that were motivated to, and could, reach an agreement,” he added.

The members of the Negotiating Committee were able to get the company to move great distances while offering much smaller trade-offs in return. And after two weeks of intensive negotiations with a mediator, separated by a week of language drafting, the parties reached an agreement.

The contract includes pay increases for all Mesa pilots—an overall average increase of 12.3 percent for the entire pilot group. By the end of the contract in 2021, the pilots will be in line with their fee-for-departure peers.

The agreement also eliminated base pay as a means for compensating pilots for soft time, amounting to thousands of dollars in increased annual earnings. And a number of other benefits will enhance the pilots’ paychecks, including improvements in deadhead pay, vacation pay, training pay, long layovers, sick time, the minimum guarantee, the 401(k) plan, and more. Other improvements to the contract affect quality of life, including more detailed hotel language, an improved preferential bidding system timeline, and improved reserve rules.

“This is an agreement that raises almost all of our standards and total compensation going forward,” acknowledged Hughes. “Our pilots should know just how hard everyone worked to look out for their interests and should once again be proud to be an ALPA pilot flying for Mesa Airlines.”

Once ratified, the MEC and Negotiating Committee immediately began the implementation process to transition to the new agreement. The pilots’ Negotiating Committee continues to work diligently with management to clear up some of the bargaining positions, and if unable, the MEC is prepared to utilize the grievance process.

In 2017, the MEC moved to a new office close to company headquarters. The new floor plan has a larger conference room that makes it easier to hold meetings and host new-hire training events and luncheons. As the pilots look to the year ahead, they’re focused on contract implementation, education, and enforcement.

“Thanks to our new contract, 2018 should be a good year for Mesa pilots,” said Hughes.

“This is an agreement that raises almost all of our standards and total compensation going forward. Our pilots should know just how hard everyone worked to look out for their interests and should once again be proud to be an ALPA pilot flying for Mesa Airlines.”

AT A GLANCE

PILOTS JOINED ALPA: 1987
NUMBER OF PILOTS: 1,225
PILOT BASES: Dallas/Fort Worth and Houston, Tex.; Phoenix, Ariz.; and Washington, D.C.
HEADQUARTERS: Phoenix, Ariz.
OPERATIONS: Mesa Air Group operates as American Eagle and United Express. It serves the U.S., Canada, and Mexico with 600 daily departures to 117 cities and 39 states
FLEET: 20 CRJ700s, 64 CRJ900s, and 60 ERJ 175s

MESA
FINALLY, A NEW CONTRACT

BY FANNY OLMO, ALPA COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

TOP: Mesa Master Executive Council (MEC) officers, Local Executive Council reps, Negotiating Committee members, and staff from ALPA’s Communications and Representation Departments attend a special MEC meeting on June 9, 2017, during which the MEC accepts the company’s tentative agreement and votes to submit it to the pilot group for ratification.
As Piedmont Airlines completes its transition to an all-jet fleet later this year, the carrier’s pilots continue working with management to pursue a business plan of slow but steady growth for the American Airlines Group subsidiary. In 2016, Piedmont began acquiring Embraer E145s while initiating the process of phasing out its previous fleet of Bombardier Dash 8 turboprops. Since then, the airline has parked its Dash 8-100s and plans to retire its remaining Dash 8-300s later this year.

This change in fleet composition has compelled Piedmont to rethink its pilot base structure. The airline opted to close its Harrisburg, Pa., crew base in spring 2017 and its Salisbury, Md., pilot domicile at the end of 2017. The carrier will operate Dash 8-300s out of Roanoke-Blacksburg Regional Airport in southwestern Virginia until sometime this summer when it closes that domicile. At that point, the sole Piedmont pilot base will be Philadelphia International Airport in Pennsylvania. Consequently, ALPA representation for the pilot group is transitioning from multiple councils to a single-council arrangement.

Despite this cutback, Piedmont has nearly 650 pilots—approximately 175 more than it had at this time last year. The airline continues to hire approximately 20 pilots a month, although this growth rate is a bit deceiving. Based on a contractual formula that considers the pilot group size, roughly 55 Piedmont pilots currently flow up to American each year. With retirements and other departures, the growth of the pilot group moving forward is expected to be moderate.

Once the transition to jets is complete, the airline’s fleet count is projected to remain essentially the same. However, the new E145s enable Piedmont to increase the number of passengers it can accommodate and flights it can operate. In addition, the airline is adding new markets to its route structure, which covers the eastern United States and Canada.

“Geographically, we’re becoming a larger airline, but we don’t really have more planes. It’s more about what Piedmont can do with jets. It makes for a different style of operation.”

FLEET SHIFTS PROMPTS OPERATIONAL CHANGES

BY JOHN PERKINSON, SENIOR STAFF WRITER

PILOTS JOINED ALPA: 1984
NUMBER OF PILOTS: 650
HEADQUARTERS: Salisbury, Md.
OPERATIONS: Piedmont transports more than 3 million passengers a year, flying approximately 400 flights a day to 55+ destinations.
FLEET: 36 E145s and 11 Dash 8-300s

PIEDMONT

An E145 and a Dash 8-100 at Salisbury–Ocean City–Wicomico Regional Airport in Maryland.

AT A GLANCE

© Piedmont Airlines
We look forward to making positive changes and working with the company to achieve a pay scale that maintains competitiveness in recruiting and retaining pilots.”
SPIRIT
BIG NEWS FOR THE NEW YEAR
BY JOHN PERKINSON, SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Spirit Airlines pilots received some welcome news as this issue of Air Line Pilot went to print—the pilot group’s Master Executive Council (MEC) announced in early January that after nearly three years of bargaining, the pilots and management had reached an agreement in principle on a new labor contract. Although the MEC was under a gag order from the National Mediation Board (NMB) and couldn’t divulge the details, Spirit pilot leaders were able to report that the agreement in principle added approximately $56 million to the value of the package management offered last fall.

The airline has been highly successful, posting record revenues including 29 straight quarters of profits. In fact, the company announced a third-quarter 2017 total operating revenue of $687.2 million—an increase of 10.6 percent compared to the third quarter of 2016—despite more than 1,650 flight cancellations brought on by Hurricanes Harvey, Irma, and Maria.

In addition, Spirit reported on plans to introduce more than 125 new routes over the next five years. To accommodate this aggressive growth, the carrier has orders for 49 new aircraft through 2021. To hire the additional 1,200 new pilots needed to keep up with this ambitious expansion, Spirit will be competing with a host of other major, national, and all-cargo airlines for the available pool of pilot candidates—added incentive for reaching a deal.

“Spirit Airlines continues to be successful thanks in large part to the hard work and professionalism of its pilots, and we deserve a new contract that reflects this commitment,” said Capt. Stuart Morrison, the pilot group’s MEC chair. “This agreement in principle represents a positive step toward this recognition and should help to ensure that our airline is better able to attract and retain the highest quality of pilots available,” he added.

Once language is complete and the two parties officially approve the tentative agreement, the pilots’ Negotiating Committee will present the agreement to the MEC for formal consideration. In addition to evaluating the terms, the MEC will decide whether the agreement should be forwarded to the Spirit pilot group for a ratification vote.

Last September, 100 percent of the pilots voted to authorize the MEC to conduct a legal strike if the two parties were to reach an impasse and the NMB released them from collective bargaining. Morrison previously stated that the MEC would make every effort to secure “the contract every Spirit pilot has earned.”

Throughout the negotiations, the Spirit MEC conducted a robust education campaign, surveying its members about their priorities and keeping them apprised of any developments. As part of this unity-building effort, the pilots engaged in a series of successful, well-attended informational picketing events.

The pilots also launched a multiplatform ad campaign with strategically placed digital billboards in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; ads in the Florida Sun-Sentinel and Detroit Free Press; press releases; and a far-reaching social media campaign to build unity among the pilots and educate the public about their fight for a fair contract that brings them in line with their peers.

“We look forward to completing the details of the agreement in principle. In the interim, we’re advising our members to continue to do the outstanding professional work they do, each and every day, until the MEC can make a final determination about the tentative agreement. If we decide to proceed, Spirit pilots must make every effort to read the agreement and attend domicile road shows so that they can ask questions and make informed decisions about our collective future.”

AT A GLANCE

PILOTS JOINED ALPA: 1996
NUMBER OF PILOTS: 1,837
HEADQUARTERS: Miramar, Fla.
PILOT BASES: Atlantic City, N.J.; Chicago, Ill.; Dallas, Tex.; Detroit, Mich.; Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; and Las Vegas, Nev.
FLEET: 31 A319s, 51 A320-200s, 5 A320neos, and 25 A321-200s

“Spirit Airlines continues to be successful thanks in large part to the hard work and professionalism of its pilots, and we deserve a new contract that reflects this commitment.”
For years, Minneapolis, Minn.-based Sun Country Airlines has enjoyed a small but comfortable niche as a Midwestern fun-and-sun carrier with a limited but loyal customer base and friendly, personal service. But with a new owner and a new CEO in charge, the airline is making some significant changes.

Faced with a drop in the airline’s revenues, last July Sun Country’s former owner hired Jude Bricker as CEO. Bricker, the former chief operating officer of budget carrier Allegiant Air, almost immediately announced plans to expand the airline and transition into a low-cost leisure carrier, seeking to position the airline between bare-bones ultra-low-cost carriers like Frontier and Spirit and more expensive mid-major airlines such as Alaska and JetBlue.

Bricker started making immediate changes to improve efficiency and cut costs, including offering buyouts to some employee groups, according to Capt. Brian Roseen, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman.

“Management hasn’t offered buyouts to the pilot group, probably because the airline is still planning to expand hiring even further to cover attrition and to support growth plans,” Roseen said.

Then in December, Wall Street investment firm Apollo Global Management, LLC bought Sun Country and announced plans to expand the fleet by six aircraft per year, a significant increase for an airline with fewer than 30 aircraft currently on the property.

Roseen noted that the company has already expressed interest in some contractual changes to adjust to the new structure.

“Our Negotiating Committee is prepared to meet with management to discuss whether we can find common ground that will help the airline grow and improve pilot pay, benefits, and our quality of life,” said Roseen. “In the meantime, we plan to poll the pilot group to make sure that we’re listening to our members before we plot a course for any changes.”

The new management has shown it can collaborate with the pilots on some issues, particularly safety. After successfully revamping its FOQA program in 2016, pilots and management are also working to finalize a letter of agreement for a new advanced qualification program to improve and update pilot training.

Another area of cooperation is Sun Country’s Community Involvement Program, run jointly by the airline and the pilots. The program has been active in the community, sponsoring park cleanups and holiday toy drives, as well as supporting food charities and Minneapolis’ annual Girls in Aviation Day.

“Sun Country has always been known as a hometown airline. We try very hard to give back to the community because the majority of us live here in the upper Midwest and have deep roots here,” Roseen explained.

The airline has cautiously begun changing some of its policies to increase profits without losing its extremely loyal customer base. The carrier plans to implement new fees for baggage and seating and will add more seats to its all-B-737 fleet.

Part of Bricker’s mandate is to rapidly expand the carrier and grow it beyond its niche in Minnesota. Competition for new pilots could hamper those growth plans; just two years into its five-year contract, the airline is already seeing its pay rates become less competitive as other carriers make contract gains.

“We’re willing to help the airline as much as we can, as long as management remembers that ‘low cost’ shouldn’t mean ‘low pay’ where pilots are concerned. Our compensation must be competitive for us to attract new pilots,” Roseen said.

“Sun Country has always been known as a hometown airline. We try very hard to give back to the community because the majority of us live here in the upper Midwest and have deep roots here.”

**SUN COUNTRY**

**NEW OWNERS AND A NEW BUSINESS STRATEGY**

**BY RUSTY AYERS, ALPA SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST**

**AT A GLANCE**

**FOUNDED:** 1982  
**PILOTS JOINED ALPA:** 1996  
**NUMBER OF PILOTS:** Approximately 300  
**PILOT BASE:** Minneapolis–St. Paul, Minn.  
**OPERATIONS:** Based in Eagan, Minn., Sun Country flies scheduled service out of its hub in Minneapolis, Minn., to 40 destinations in the U.S., Mexico, Costa Rica, and the Caribbean, 16 of which are operated year-round. The airline also operates charter flights to numerous locations worldwide. One of the first U.S. airlines to fly scheduled service to Cuba, Sun Country stopped flying to the island in November 2017  
**FLEET:** 28 B-737NGs, with more aircraft leased seasonally

**TOP:** Sun Country pilots volunteer at the 2017 Girls in Aviation Day in Minneapolis, Minn. From left, Capt. Tom Born, Capt. James Aarestad, and F/O Chris Uribe.
The pilots of Trans States Airlines welcome the new year by preparing for Section 6 contract negotiations. "A letter of agreement (LOA) in our contract allows us to extend the contract amendable date for two years if the company takes delivery of new Mitsubishi regional jets by August 2018 or signs a capacity purchase agreement with a mainline partner for their use," said Capt. Neil Butler, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chair. "It's clear that neither of these deadlines will be met, so we look forward to opening talks sooner rather than later."

The MEC has been laying the groundwork for the upcoming bargaining sessions, surveying members about their priorities and preferences. The pilot leaders are conducting an extensive education campaign, including a five-part newsletter highlighting the negotiating process and what to expect. In addition, the MEC, the Negotiating Committee, and the Grievance Committee convened late last year to review new and ongoing grievances and negotiations strategies. Bargaining is expected to begin sometime in February 2018.

The MEC Negotiating Committee is well prepared for the upcoming talks, having achieved several recent important improvements. Chief among these were a contract extension signed in 2015 and an LOA for a new preferential bidding system (PBS). The airline purchased the NavBlue PBS and began running live trials with parallel schedule bids for six months to allow the pilots to better understand how the program works. "The pilots soon realized that by using PBS, they could increase the efficiency of their trips and achieve more days off," said Butler. The PBS LOA also provided significant contractual improvements like a minimum-day guarantee of four hours and 15 minutes.

The pilot group also secured other contractual enhancements such as a fatigue LOA and a new FOQA program. The fatigue LOA ensures that a pilot doesn’t lose flight pay because of a fatigue event and provides protections for junior pilots who have yet to accrue sufficient sick time. Regarding FOQA, the union and management have agreed to share de-identified aggregate information with the FAA so that the agency can identify and address operational risk issues. Both were approved last year.

Change has been the norm at TSA where the pilot group and aircraft fleet have nearly doubled during the last two years. Unfortunately, this transformation has been accompanied by the occasional growing pain. For example, management and the MEC’s negotiators exchanged several proposals but were unable to come to terms on the expansion of the Washington Dulles International Airport base to include nearby Reagan Washington National Airport. Rather than continuing the bargaining process, Trans States acted unilaterally by transforming Washington into a co-domicile last fall. "In addition to management bypassing the MEC, the current contract doesn’t adequately address the unique issues that can arise in a co-domicile situation," remarked Butler. The MEC is pursuing a grievance to remedy this problem.

Butler commented that the airline has witnessed some recent leadership changes, including the departure of the director of operations, who was a true pilot advocate. He described current labor relations as "a work in progress," adding that he hopes the environment will improve. Butler noted that the pilot group and the MEC filed a greater number of grievances in the last six months of 2017 than has typically been filed in the past.

Still, Butler pointed to the many good things happening at the carrier, including hiring and fleet expansion. In addition, the pilots and management came into a co-domicile last fall. Rather than continuing the bargaining process, Trans States acted unilaterally by transforming Washington into a co-domicile last fall. "In addition to management bypassing the MEC, the current contract doesn’t adequately address the unique issues that can arise in a co-domicile situation," remarked Butler. The MEC is pursuing a grievance to remedy this problem.

Butler commented that the airline has witnessed some recent leadership changes, including the departure of the director of operations, who was a true pilot advocate. He described current labor relations as “a work in progress,” adding that he hopes the environment will improve. Butler noted that the pilot group and the MEC filed a greater number of grievances in the last six months of 2017 than has typically been filed in the past.

Still, Butler pointed to the many good things happening at the carrier, including hiring and fleet expansion. In addition, the pilots and management came into a co-domicile last fall. Rather than continuing the bargaining process, Trans States acted unilaterally by transforming Washington into a co-domicile last fall. “In addition to management bypassing the MEC, the current contract doesn’t adequately address the unique issues that can arise in a co-domicile situation,” remarked Butler. The MEC is pursuing a grievance to remedy this problem.

Butler commented that the airline has witnessed some recent leadership changes, including the departure of the director of operations, who was a true pilot advocate. He described current labor relations as “a work in progress,” adding that he hopes the environment will improve. Butler noted that the pilot group and the MEC filed a greater number of grievances in the last six months of 2017 than has typically been filed in the past.

Still, Butler pointed to the many good things happening at the carrier, including hiring and fleet expansion. In addition, the pilots and management came into a co-domicile last fall. Rather than continuing the bargaining process, Trans States acted unilaterally by transforming Washington into a co-domicile last fall. “In addition to management bypassing the MEC, the current contract doesn’t adequately address the unique issues that can arise in a co-domicile situation,” remarked Butler. The MEC is pursuing a grievance to remedy this problem.

Butler commented that the airline has witnessed some recent leadership changes, including the departure of the director of operations, who was a true pilot advocate. He described current labor relations as “a work in progress,” adding that he hopes the environment will improve. Butler noted that the pilot group and the MEC filed a greater number of grievances in the last six months of 2017 than has typically been filed in the past.

Still, Butler pointed to the many good things happening at the carrier, including hiring and fleet expansion. In addition, the pilots and management came into a co-domicile last fall. Rather than continuing the bargaining process, Trans States acted unilaterally by transforming Washington into a co-domicile last fall. “In addition to management bypassing the MEC, the current contract doesn’t adequately address the unique issues that can arise in a co-domicile situation,” remarked Butler. The MEC is pursuing a grievance to remedy this problem.

Butler commented that the airline has witnessed some recent leadership changes, including the departure of the director of operations, who was a true pilot advocate. He described current labor relations as “a work in progress,” adding that he hopes the environment will improve. Butler noted that the pilot group and the MEC filed a greater number of grievances in the last six months of 2017 than has typically been filed in the past.
AT A GLANCE

PILOTS JOINED ALPA: 1932
NUMBER OF PILOTS: More than 12,700
HEADQUARTERS: Chicago, Ill.
PILOT DOMICILES: Chicago, Ill.; Cleveland, Ohio; Denver, Colo.; Guam; Houston, Tex.; Los Angeles, Calif.; New York City; N.Y.; San Francisco, Calif.; and Washington Dulles, Va.
FLEET: A319s, A320s, B-737s, B-757s, B-767s, B-777s, and B-787s

UNITED

RAISING THE BAR

BY KRISTEN MIANO, DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

During 2017, the United pilot group continued its long history of fighting to improve and protect the airline piloting profession. After starting the year with contract improvements resulting from the successful application of pattern-bargaining strategies, the United Master Executive Council (MEC) ended the year with the announcement that the next round of Section 6 contract negotiations would open early. As part of these discussions, the parties are addressing outstanding implementation and grievance issues to streamline the Section 6 process and allow negotiators to focus on high-priority contractual improvements in 2018.

The pilot group was also on the forefront of pilot-partisan legislative issues throughout 2017, including advocating in the news media and on Capitol Hill for an end to flag-of-convenience schemes, calling for safer practices regarding lithium batteries, publicly denouncing the unfair practices of state-subsidized airlines, and fighting to maintain the industry’s high safety and training standards.

MEC members were featured on Fox News in February, calling for the enforcement of provisions in U.S. Open Skies agreements designed to protect American aviation jobs. Capt. Todd Insler, the pilots’ MEC chairman, and pilot spokesmen were also quoted and featured in prominent news outlets, including The Wall Street Journal, USA Today, Forbes, and TheStreet.com, delivering their message to the flying public and representatives in Washington, D.C.

“Failure to compete in the marketplace should not be cause for some regional airlines to compromise airline safety in any way,” said Insler in a press release addressing Sen. John Thune’s FAA reauthorization amendment aimed at weakening safety standards. “These carriers must stop hiding behind this fake pilot shortage, and Congress must stop putting today’s hard-won safety record at risk.”

The United MEC also advanced its advocacy efforts at ALPA’s Legislative Summit in June. A record number of United pilots joined their fellow ALPA members in urging legislators on Capitol Hill to protect first officer qualification and training standards in the FAA reauthorization.

In addition to opening expedited negotiations and vigorous advocacy campaigns, the United pilot group made headlines for its humanitarian efforts. On October 4, United pilots came together with United Airlines, the AFL-CIO, the Association of Flight Attendants, and the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers to transport more than 300 relief workers and union volunteers, including skilled craftsmen, first responders, and medical staff, to provide aid and resources to their fellow Americans severely impacted by Hurricane Maria.

The MEC chairman arranged for United Airlines to donate a B-777 for the trip from Newark Liberty Airport to Puerto Rico’s Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport carrying 35,000 pounds of relief supplies (see “Flying Heroes: ALPA Pilots Deliver Aid to Hurricane-Ravaged Puerto Rico,” November 2017). The return flight from San Juan was filled with Puerto Rican evacuees, patients seeking medical attention not available on the island, and aid workers seeking to return to the mainland.

“This is different. I’m taking supplies down to people who need it, and I’m taking people from a dangerous situation to safety,” said F/O Mike Hamilton, an ALPA executive vice president and one of the United pilots who flew the trip. “It’s a unique opportunity to use my profession as an airline pilot to do something that touches people directly; and for me, it’s probably a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”

The new year already proves to be promising. For the first time in 15 years, the MEC leadership was elected unanimously. Todd Insler returns to his role as chairman and is joined by Capt. Tom Murphy, as vice chairman, Capt. Bill Neveu as secretary, and Capt. Rick Cameron as treasurer. This was a powerful show of unity and support, and the pilot group moves into 2018 stronger than ever.

With more than 12,700 pilots and a promising contract negotiation on the horizon, the United pilot group begins 2018 unified and determined to win all challenges and seize all opportunities during the coming year. ☞

“There’s a unique opportunity to use my profession as an airline pilot to do something that touches people directly; and for me, it’s probably a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity.”
Virgin America
Coming Together with a Contract

BY KATY ADAMS, ALPA SENIOR COMMUNICATIONS SPECIALIST

Last year resulted in the first contract for the pilots of Virgin America, who are now working under a joint collective bargaining agreement. And while the path to get there was tumultuous, it yielded improvements for the pilot group. When Alaska Air Group announced the purchase of Virgin America in 2016 and its intention to integrate Alaska Airlines and Virgin America, the Virgin America pilots—who at the time were in negotiations with their own airline for their first collective bargaining agreement—began the long and at times turbulent journey of a merger.

After a joint transition and process agreement was finally reached in December 2016, the next step was to negotiate a joint collective bargaining agreement for the merged pilot group.

Only three items of Alaska’s current contract were open for negotiations: compensation, 401(k)/retirement benefits, and scope/job security protections. “In the beginning, Alaska management shared its vision for a smooth and successful transition. We were told that management wanted to work with us to reach a joint collective bargaining agreement by focusing squarely on the process of merging the two airlines into a single carrier as quickly as possible,” said Capt. Joe Youngerman, the Virgin America pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman.

Yet while the pilots of Virgin America continued to work without a contract or pay raises for more than two years, Alaska management dragged out a process that could have been completed in a matter of days or months. The delays and resistance to provide all pilots with a market-rate contract led to mediated negotiations, which failed, followed by an arbitrated award that gave pilots an increase in pay and retirement benefits, yet still leaves the pilots behind their industry peers and excluded important scope provisions.

“Our Joint Negotiating Committee and team of attorneys did an incredible job, and we appreciate all of their hard work and support. The award was not everything we wanted, and we were denied the job-protection provisions we know are so important. The next round of negotiations will be regular Section 6 full contract negotiations that will not have an arbitration mechanism built in. We’ll be looking for improvements in the future,” noted Youngerman.

The joint collective bargaining agreement was implemented in early November 2017. As the Joint Negotiating Committee moves into the contract implementation phase, the Virgin America Merger Committee is working to create an integrated pilot seniority list.

While it’s certainly been a challenging year for the Virgin America pilots, their unity, camaraderie, and professionalism have not wavered and continue to be their greatest strength. At the Virgin America regular MEC meeting in November, all three MEC officers along with the existing Negotiating Committee chairman and members volunteered to continue to serve and were reelected. Additionally, Capt. Shane Atkins, the Los Angeles, Calif., Local Executive Council rep, joined the Negotiating Committee, further displaying the unity, commitment, and dedication of the union reps to the pilot group.

“The support and professionalism from our pilots throughout this difficult period has been tremendous,” said Youngerman. “The joint collective bargaining agreement becomes amendable in 2020 with negotiations expected to begin in the second half of 2019. This will be an opportunity to address issues like scope and work rules that we’re still lacking. The next negotiations will be a test of our pilot group’s resolve, participation, and unity. There is much work to be done between now and then to be prepared. We’ll get the contract that we are all willing to fight for and nothing less.”

Our Joint Negotiating Committee and team of attorneys did an incredible job, and we appreciate all of their hard work and support.”

At a Glance

PILOTS JOINED ALPA: 2015
NUMBER OF PILOTS: 760
PILOT BASES: Los Angeles, Calif.; San Francisco, Calif.; and New York, N.Y.
HEADQUARTERS: Burlingame, Calif.
DESTINATIONS: 24
FLEET: 10 A319-100s, 53 Airbus A320-200s, and 3 A321neos

TOP: The Virgin America Master Executive Council (MEC) meets in its Las Vegas, Nev., office for the last regular MEC meeting of 2017.
Last year, Wasaya pilots were flying through new territory. A restructure at their company had brought in new management and a new board of directors. A new contract, negotiated in just 11 days, had resulted in pay raises, a reduction in work schedules, and substantial increases in vacation time. The airline also added a new destination, Winnipeg, Man., and four Dash 8s to the fleet. It was a new beginning for Wasaya and the pilot group, which had seen its share of turbulence over the nine years that it’s been part of ALPA.

As 2017 came to a close, the airline was focusing on growth and recruiting new pilots onto the property. The pilot group has worked with management to increase recruitment efforts, including reaching out to colleges and to the First Nation high schools. Capt. James Harding, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman, has visited with students to talk about flying and pursuing a career in aviation, coordinating with ALPA’s Education Committee to provide educational materials and handouts. Wasaya also participates in the Jazz Aviation pathways program that provides career progression from college to airlines like Wasaya then to Jazz and, potentially, to Air Canada.

“We not only offer attractive pay scales—especially after our recent contract—but also a quality of life rarely found as a pilot,” said Harding. “Our pilots are home most nights. I get up in the morning, make my 10-minute drive to the airport (12 if I hit both lights on the way), and I’m at work. Few airlines offer this kind of work-life balance. It’s what keeps many of our pilots at Wasaya, and it’s what keeps me here as well.”

“The relationship we’ve developed with management has allowed us to create careers for our pilots at Wasaya and to recruit new pilots to our cockpits,” Harding noted. “We’re proud of our growth, our company, and our productive cooperation with our management. We’re looking forward to welcoming more new pilots to Wasaya and negotiating our next contract in 2019. It took us 11 days the last time. Maybe we can get that down to 10.”

“Our pilots are home most nights. I get up in the morning, make my 10-minute drive to the airport (12 if I hit both lights on the way), and I’m at work. Few airlines offer this kind of work-life balance. It’s what keeps many of our pilots at Wasaya, and it’s what keeps me here as well.”

**Wasaya**

**A Path to Growth**

**By Jen Lofquist, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist**

Last year, Wasaya pilots were flying through new territory. A restructure at their company had brought in new management and a new board of directors. A new contract, negotiated in just 11 days, had resulted in pay raises, a reduction in work schedules, and substantial increases in vacation time. The airline also added a new destination, Winnipeg, Man., and four Dash 8s to the fleet. It was a new beginning for Wasaya and the pilot group, which had seen its share of turbulence over the nine years that it’s been part of ALPA.

As 2017 came to a close, the airline was focusing on growth and recruiting new pilots onto the property. The pilot group has worked with management to increase recruitment efforts, including reaching out to colleges and to the First Nation high schools. Capt. James Harding, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman, has visited with students to talk about flying and pursuing a career in aviation, coordinating with ALPA’s Education Committee to provide educational materials and handouts. Wasaya also participates in the Jazz Aviation pathways program that provides career progression from college to airlines like Wasaya then to Jazz and, potentially, to Air Canada.

“We not only offer attractive pay scales—especially after our recent contract—but also a quality of life rarely found as a pilot,” said Harding. “Our pilots are home most nights. I get up in the morning, make my 10-minute drive to the airport (12 if I hit both lights on the way), and I’m at work. Few airlines offer this kind of work-life balance. It’s what keeps many of our pilots at Wasaya, and it’s what keeps me here as well.”

“The relationship we’ve developed with management has allowed us to create careers for our pilots at Wasaya and to recruit new pilots to our cockpits,” Harding noted. “We’re proud of our growth, our company, and our productive cooperation with our management. We’re looking forward to welcoming more new pilots to Wasaya and negotiating our next contract in 2019. It took us 11 days the last time. Maybe we can get that down to 10.”

“Our pilots are home most nights. I get up in the morning, make my 10-minute drive to the airport (12 if I hit both lights on the way), and I’m at work. Few airlines offer this kind of work-life balance. It’s what keeps many of our pilots at Wasaya, and it’s what keeps me here as well.”

**AT A GLANCE**

**AIRLINE FOUNDED:** 1989

**PILOTS JOINED ALPA:** 2008

**NUMBER OF PILOTS:** 92

**PILOT DOMICILES:** Thunder Bay, Pickle Lake, Sioux Lookout, and Red Lake, Ont.

**HUB:** Thunder Bay, Ont.

**FLEET:** Beech 1900Ds, Cessna Caravan 208Bs, Hawker Siddeley 748s, Pilatus PC-12s, and Dash 8s

**TOP:** Wasaya pilots fly the Stanley Cup, along with 5,000 pounds of donated hockey equipment, to the Sandy Lake First Nation in February 2017.

**RIGHT:** Two Beechcraft 1900Ds on the tarmac at Sioux Lookout Airport in Ontario.

---

**50 » Air Line Pilot January-February 2018**
WestJet pilots are making history. The group voted to join ALPA in May of last year, and just a few months later had already begun scheduled contract negotiations for the airline’s first-ever collective agreement.

“So far, we have made tremendous progress with ALPA’s guidance and support,” said Capt. Rob McFadyen, the WestJet pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. McFadyen, along with F/O Tim Perry, the MEC vice chairman, and Capt. Christina Thomson, the MEC secretary-treasurer, are keenly focused on obtaining a market-rate contract for the pilot group and successfully partnering with WestJet management to help grow the airline.

“After investing time in this airline, pilots would prefer not to leave WestJet. But they are and will continue to do so as long as our contract is not up to par with our peers,” McFadyen pointed out. “We can be an invaluable asset in helping to grow this airline, but we must have a collective agreement that reflects the skills and worth we bring to WestJet.”

Since joining ALPA, the MEC has undergone leadership training, held its first-ever Family Awareness event, set up a bargaining schedule with the company, developed a solid strategic plan, and identified the pilot group’s three main bargaining priorities.

“Our pilots have spoken, and their mandate is clear: all WestJet flying should be done by WestJet pilots, we expect compensation that reflects our true value, and we need general improvements to our working rules,” McFadyen said.

The pilots have also made clear their concerns regarding the company’s establishment of Swoop, the airline’s ultra-low-cost carrier, and the recent announcement of additional outsourcing to Pacific Coastal Airlines under the WestJet Link moniker, through a capacity purchase agreement.

“There are many questions about how the announcement of Swoop will affect our pilots and their families,” acknowledged McFadyen. “But one thing is certain: we will remain united against any attempt to work around what should be our flying under the WestJet umbrella. It does not matter what we have in our contract if we cannot protect our careers.”

Looking to the year ahead, the MEC is focused on completing collective bargaining in a timely manner. However, the ultimate question is whether management will work with the WestJet pilots and bargain in good faith to meet the MEC’s realistic objectives. “Through honesty and integrity, we will work to forge the mutual trust that is required to achieve a successful outcome for both our pilots and WestJet airlines. It is our joint responsibility with management to ensure that we reach a deal here at the bargaining table,” McFadyen said.

WestJet, Canada’s second-largest major airline, has hubs in Vancouver, B.C.; Calgary, Alb.; and Toronto, Ont., and headquarters in Calgary. WestJet pilots operate an average of 425 flights per day with service to 150 destinations in Canada, the United States, Europe, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean.

AT A GLANCE

PILOTS JOINED ALPA: 2017

NUMBER OF PILOTS: 1,526

PILOT BASES: Vancouver, B.C.; Calgary, Alb.; and Toronto, Ont.

HEADQUARTERS: Calgary, Alb.

OPERATIONS: WestJet and its regional airline, WestJet Encore, offer scheduled service to more than 100 destinations in North America, Central America, the Caribbean, and Europe. Through partnerships with airlines representing every major region of the world, WestJet flies to more than 150 destinations in more than 20 countries

FLEET: B-737-600s, B-737-700s, B-737-800s, B-737-MAX 8s, and B-767-300ERs
Preparing Your 2017 Taxes

By Dan White, Senior Benefits Attorney, ALPA Retirement & Insurance Department

This article summarizes the federal rules for pilots regarding the taxation and deductibility of travel expenses for the 2017 tax year, for which individual tax returns are generally due by April 17, 2018. Please note that the information in this article is only applicable to 2017. Under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which was signed into law by President Trump on Dec. 22, 2017, many of the tax rules discussed here will change in 2018. The changes that are relevant to pilot business travel will be summarized in a separate article.

A pilot flying the line is always on business travel. Therefore, qualifying travel expenses that the pilot incurs are deductible as ordinary and necessary business expenses, by either the airline or the pilot. ALPA’s Retirement & Insurance Department has put together the following information regarding travel expenses to assist you in preparing your taxes.

**TAXATION OF PER DIEM**

Many of ALPA’s collective bargaining agreements provide that the airline will pay each pilot a fixed amount, often called “per diem,” to cover meals and incidental expenses (M&IE) that pilots incur while on a trip. When an airline makes these per diem payments (or otherwise reimburses pilots for travel expenses), the airline may exclude all or a portion of these payments or reimbursements from a pilot’s taxable income reported on Form W-2. The amount generally excluded from a pilot’s income is the amount that does not exceed the federal per diem rates. Per diem payments paid for day or other nonovernight trips (trips that don’t require sleep or rest) and amounts paid in excess of the federal per diem rates are included in the pilot’s taxable income and are reported on the pilot’s Form W-2. Frequently, the amount of per diem the airline pays or reimburses isn’t enough to cover reasonable business travel expenses. In those cases, pilots may be entitled to claim an itemized deduction for the expenses not covered.

If a pilot receives no per diem payments or reimbursements, or receives per diem payments that the airline includes in taxable income, the pilot may be entitled to claim an itemized deduction for expenses incurred while on business travel.

**EXPENSES FOR “OVERNIGHT TRIPS”**

For travel expenses to be excluded from the pilot’s taxable income or to be claimed by the pilot as an itemized deduction, the pilot’s expense must be incurred while on a
business trip that requires sleep or rest (an “overnight trip”). Expenses incurred on trips that aren’t overnight trips don’t satisfy this requirement. For pilots, the expenses at issue are usually M&IE expenses, because the airline pays for lodging directly or reimburses the pilot for it separately.

**SUBSTANTIATING EXPENSES**
Recognizing the burden of substantiating expenses, the IRS treats a designated amount of expenses relating to overnight trips as “deemed substantiated.” For amounts deemed substantiated, pilots don’t need to maintain records of the amounts actually spent while on the trip.

If the employer pays for lodging separately, then the expenses that may be deemed substantiated are those for M&IE. The amount that is deemed substantiated is generally equal to the amount the federal government would pay its own employees for M&IE when they travel to the same locality or the amount determined under special M&IE rates applicable to transportation industry employees.

The federal government publishes standard M&IE rates for every locality in the world. The M&IE rates for CONUS (for Continental United States) can be found at [www.gsa.gov](http://www.gsa.gov), and M&IE rates for OCONUS (for Outside CONUS) can be found at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov). For 2017, the daily M&IE rates ranged from $51 to $74 for CONUS, and from $1 to $299 for OCONUS. These rates may change on a monthly basis.

The IRS also provides special transportation industry M&IE rates. For 2017, the transportation industry M&IE rate is unchanged from last year and remains $63 for CONUS and $68 for OCONUS. Pilots may use either the standard M&IE rates or the special transportation industry M&IE rates to determine the amount deemed substantiated for claiming itemized tax deductions. For any calendar year, a pilot must use either the standard M&IE rates for all CONUS travel or the special transportation industry M&IE rates for all OCONUS travel, and the same applies for all OCONUS travel.

**WHAT’S NOT INCLUDED IN M&IE RATES?**
The “incidental expense” portion of the M&IE rate doesn’t include such expenses as transportation between places of lodging or business and places where meals are taken, telephone calls, laundry, cleaning and pressing, the mailing costs of filing travel vouchers, and payments for employer-sponsored credit card billings. These expenses, to the extent they constitute reasonable business expenses, are deductible by the payor (airline or pilot) as business expenses (subject to applicable limits).

**PRORATING THE M&IE LIMIT**
The full M&IE amount is available only for a full calendar day of business travel, i.e., from 12:01 a.m. through midnight. For a partial day of travel, the pilot must prorate the applicable M&IE amount at 75 percent. Assume, for example, that a pilot’s trip begins at 1:00 a.m. on Monday and ends at 12:05 a.m. on Wednesday and that the pilot’s required rest occurred in cities with an applicable M&IE per diem rate of $51. Applying the IRS’s allowed method of proration, the amount deemed substantiated would be $38.25 (.75 x $51) for Monday, $51 for Tuesday, and $38.25 (.75 x $51) for Wednesday.

**ITEMIZED DEDUCTIONS**
As mentioned earlier, if a pilot has business travel expenses that the employer didn’t reimburse, then the pilot may be able to claim an itemized deduction on his or her tax return. In order to claim this deduction, the pilot must complete IRS Form 2106, “Employee Business Expenses.” This form, and all other IRS forms and publications, may be obtained at [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) or by calling the IRS at 1-800-TAXFORM.

To claim any business travel expense as an itemized deduction, a pilot must be able to substantiate the time, place, and business purpose of the business travel through actual records, such as a pilot’s logbook. The amount of the business expense must also be substantiated using written records, with two exceptions. First, M&IE amounts may be deemed substantiated without the need for written records. Second, if a particular business travel expense is less than $75, the IRS won’t require a receipt, unless the expense is for lodging, in which case receipts are necessary even if the expense is less than $75.

Generally, a pilot’s itemized deduction for M&IE is subject to an 80 percent limit and a 2 percent threshold. Under a special rule that applies to pilots, 80 percent of the M&IE amount deemed substantiated is deductible in 2017. In addition, no itemized deduction for M&IE may be claimed unless the pilot’s aggregate miscellaneous itemized deductions (including business expenses) exceed 2 percent of his or her adjusted gross income. Union dues constitute deductible employee business expenses and count toward the 2 percent threshold.

**APPLYING THE FEDERAL M&IE RATES USING THE STANDARD M&IE RATES**
For an example of how the federal M&IE rates are applied, assume a collective bargaining agreement entitles a pilot to per diem payments equal to $3.50 per hour. Assume also that a pilot covered by the agreement flew a two-day trip in 2017, with report for duty at 12:01 a.m. on the first day, an overnight stay in Chicago, Ill., and release from duty at midnight on the second day. The 2017 federal M&IE rate for Chicago is $74, so the maximum excludable amount for this trip is $148 ($74 x 2 days). The pilot is actually paid per diem of $168 ($3.50/hour x 48 hours), so $148 is excluded from the pilot’s taxable income and is shown on the pilot’s Form W-2, Box 12, Code L. The remaining $20 is included in the pilot’s taxable income and reported on Form W-2 in Box 1 (and Boxes 3 and 5, as applicable) as taxable wages.

Alternatively, assume the collective bargaining agreement entitles the pilot to
per diem payments equal to only $1.00 per hour, and the pilot made the same two-day trip in 2017. In this scenario, the entire per diem payment of $48 ($1.00 x 48 hours) would be excluded from the pilot’s taxable income because this amount is less than the maximum excludable amount of $148. However, in this case, the pilot may claim an itemized deduction of $100 for the difference between the excluded payment of $48 and the federal M&IE rate of $148 without needing to substantiate the M&IE expenses actually incurred (subject to the 80 percent limit and 2 percent threshold already discussed).

What if this pilot’s M&IE exceed $148? Regardless of the amount excluded from the pilot’s income, if the pilot’s actual expenses exceed the federal M&IE rate of $148, an itemized deduction is available for all reasonable amounts spent (less the amount excluded from the pilot’s taxable income), but only if the pilot can actually substantiate all expenses (both above and below the deemed substantiated amount of $148).

For example, if the airline paid the pilot excluded (nontaxable) per diem payments of $48, but the pilot’s actual, reasonable M&IE were $200, the pilot could claim an itemized deduction of $152 ($200 minus $48), but only if the pilot could actually substantiate the entire $200 in expenses. Alternatively, the pilot could claim an itemized deduction of $100 ($148 minus $48) without substantiating any expenses, since all expenses up to $148 are deemed substantiated. (All of the pilot’s itemized deductions would be subject to the 80 percent limit and 2 percent threshold.)

**USING THE SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY M&IE RATES**

Assume a pilot travels away from home on business within CONUS. The airline pays the pilot a standard per diem allowance of $2.00 for each hour the pilot is away from his or her domicile. The pilot leaves the domicile at 9:00 a.m. on Monday and returns to the domicile at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday with an overnight stay. The pilot receives $48 ($2.00 x 24) in taxable per diem. The CONUS special transportation industry M&IE rate is $63 per day, so the amount deemed substantiated using the special transportation industry rate for these days is $94.50 ($63 x 2 x .75), i.e., the total per diem allowance under the special CONUS rates for the transportation industry, prorated as previously discussed. The pilot could claim an itemized deduction of $94.50 (subject to the 80 percent limit and 2 percent threshold). If the pilot uses the special CONUS rates for the transportation industry to calculate his or her deduction for any CONUS trips in 2017, he or she must use the special CONUS M&IE rate for all CONUS trips in 2017.

In this example, if the airline had excluded the pilot’s $48 per diem payment from his or her income, rather than including it as a taxable per diem allowance, he or she would be entitled to take an itemized M&IE deduction of $46.50 ($94.50 minus $48) without substantiation, using the special transportation industry M&IE rates (subject to the 80 percent limit and 2 percent threshold).

When a pilot uses the special transportation industry M&IE rates, the deduction may be less than if the standard M&IE rates are used, especially if the pilot usually travels to higher-cost destinations.

**WHAT IF A PILOT REGULARLY TRAVELS OUTSIDE THE U.S.?**

If a pilot generally travels to high-cost areas of the world away from home on business outside the U.S., he or she may be entitled to a larger deduction using the M&IE rates for the specific location of travel. Assume, for example, that the airline pays per diem at the rate of $68 per day for an overseas trip that is excluded for income tax purposes. If the pilot uses the special transportation industry M&IE rate to calculate the itemized deductions for OCONUS for 2017, he or she won’t be entitled to any itemized deduction since the special transportation industry M&IE rate for OCONUS is $68 per day. However, by using the standard M&IE rates for all OCONUS travel that year, this pilot may be able to claim an itemized deduction for tax purposes. Assume the pilot traveled to Narita, Japan, in January 2017; the standard OCONUS M&IE rate for Narita at that time was $87 per day. Using the standard OCONUS M&IE rates, the pilot generally would be able to claim an itemized deduction of $19 ($87 minus $68) for each full day of a trip to Narita without substantiation (subject to the 80 percent limit and the 2 percent threshold).

**Note:** The examples in this article are for illustrative purposes only.

---

**Tax Advice**

As with most matters concerning taxes, the federal law governing the taxation of pilots’ expenses and per diem payments is complex. All pilots are urged to obtain competent tax advice about applying the information in this article to their own situation.

**Available Documents**

For the benefit of your tax advisers, the official IRS rules for the 2017 tax year are found in IRS Notices 2016-58 and 2017-54. General information is also contained in IRS Publication 463, Travel, Entertainment, Gift, and Car Expenses; IRS Publication 1542, Per Diem Rates; and Revenue Procedure 2011-47. These documents are available at www.irs.gov.
The Future Looks Bright
For ALPA Canada Members

By Rob Lynch, ALPA Senior Communications Coordinator

To close out 2017, leaders from ALPA Canada’s 11 pilot groups made their way to Ottawa, Ont., for the 15th annual ALPA holiday reception and a special ALPA Canada Board meeting to discuss strategic planning.

“Fifteen years ago, there were approximately 1,500 Canadian members who flew for five airlines,” said Capt. Dan Adamus (Jazz Aviation), ALPA Canada president. “Today, with the pilots from Air Georgian, Encore, and WestJet who joined in 2017, ALPA now represents more than 5,000 pilots in Canada who fly for 11 airlines. And I’m confident that the number will continue to grow in 2018.”

The reception, held in early December, provided pilots with an opportunity to network with fellow pilot leaders, government officials, and other industry stakeholders, including Members of Parliament, senators, and representatives from Canada’s aviation sector and several airline management.

Capt. Tim Canoll, ALPA’s president, addressed the group, reflecting on his trip to Calgary, Alb., a year ago to kick off the card collection campaign with WestJet pilots and echoing Adamus’ message of ALPA’s growth in 2018. Discussing the importance of working together, Canoll noted, “If you think about your individual roles in the Canadian aviation industry, be it with an airport, as a legislator, or as a regulator or as some other element of the industry, combined we are much mightier together than we are individually.”

The following day, ALPA’s Canada Board—the master executive council chairs of ALPA’s 11 Canadian pilot groups and three officers—took part in a special meeting to conduct strategic planning and begin charting a new course for its ever-increasing members.

To start the meeting, Adamus; Capt. Brian Shury (Jazz Aviation), ALPA Canada vice president; and Capt. Rod Lypchuk (Jazz Aviation), ALPA Canada vice president administration and finance, discussed the work ALPA’s Canada Board has been conducting on behalf of its members. They highlighted the Safer Skies initiative—a joint effort of more than 9,000 pilots belonging to the Safer Skies Coalition—which has focused on the serious safety concerns regarding fatigue risk management systems (FRMS) as proposed by Transport Canada. ALPA’s recent lobbying efforts have included engaging with Members of Parliament and the tabling of a petition with almost 10,000 signatures in the House of Commons. The petition called on the government to further address the issues of pilot fatigue and FRMS. These efforts dovetailed with the Canada Board’s increased news media outreach and revamped social media efforts.

During the meeting, a member of the Air Canada Pilots Association’s (ACP) Master Elected Council discussed with participants the collaboration between ALPA and ACPA and ongoing efforts to build on that relationship.

“Collaboration like this is great for the pilot community,” noted Adamus. “While there is still an incredible amount of work to be done, we’re having conversations now that were completely unheard of even just a few years ago, and this is what’s best for the profession. For far too long, pilot groups worked in individual silos, which ultimately has been a major contributing factor in the degrading of our profession.”

In reviewing the strategic plan, members discussed the role and purpose of the Canada Board, focusing on how it’s perceived by members and the work it does for its members.

A positive growth trend has reinforced ALPA’s increased strength within the airline industry and has allowed the Canada Board to identify opportunities for collaboration and to advance the careers of Canadian ALPA members.

“It’s an exciting time in Canada as more pilot groups continue to recognize that whether they’re unrepresented or independent, we as professional pilots are stronger and safer when we work collaboratively and speak with one voice,” acknowledged Adamus.

With the Canada Board’s new and improved methods of communication, and a plan to advance its mission “to work collectively as the leading advocate and representative for the Canadian professional pilot, with a focus on safety”—the centerpiece of its strategic plan—ALPA’s Canada Board is well positioned in 2018 to achieve increased safety, security, and viability for the Canadian aviation industry and the piloting profession.
Adapting to Change to Enhance Negotiations Support

The atmosphere was full of energy as nearly 75 pilot volunteers from 18 different pilot groups gathered for ALPA’s Strategic Preparedness and Strike Committee (SPSC) Workshop, held recently at the Association’s Herndon, Va., Conference Center to organize and train SPSC volunteers.

The theme, “Charting Course in Changing Skies,” focused discussions on adapting to the aviation industry’s evolving environment. Key to this effort is rigorous and thorough strategic planning to build, maintain, and leverage pilot unity for effective contract negotiations and managing other large-scale, decision-making opportunities. Workshop participants learned how to perform their SPSC roles more effectively through new practices and technologies while networking with their peers and sharing experiences.

SPSC enables ALPA pilot groups to maintain a continued state of readiness to respond to company and industry actions that could affect their working conditions by applying community support networks to supplement traditional outreach efforts. Components of this program include strategic preparedness, communications, Family Awareness, and Pilot-to-Pilot®.

“The strength of our union lies in our collaborative efforts,” said Capt. Tim Canoll, ALPA’s president, who stressed the value of unity building during his opening remarks. He observed that by incorporating these time-tested programs and sharing best practices, SPSC offers ALPA pilot groups a competitive edge over their counterparts at other North American airlines.

Throughout the interactive two-day training session, workshop participants heard presentations highlighting the Association’s bargaining mission and the importance of pilot group strategic planning.

Attendees engaged in a mock pilot unity-building event to better understand how these social functions provide educational opportunities and augment two-way communications. They also participated in a series of breakout sessions, some specific to their areas of expertise in negotiations support work, and shared their perspectives and recommendations on how ALPA and its members can continue to strengthen the program and chart new, effective paths to success.

“ENGAGE, PARTICIPATE, QUESTION, DISCUSS”

This was the mantra Capt. Wes Reed (FedEx Express), ALPA’s SPSC chair, encouraged committee volunteers to live by. He outlined the three cornerstones of an effective SPSC team, including communications: “The messages you put out to your members are critical to your success,” he said, emphasizing that this information needs to be “pertinent, informative, and cohesive.” The two other elements consist of strong leadership to provide direction and mentoring to ensure new members benefit from the experiences of their more senior peers. Reed stressed that from the largest to the smallest ALPA pilot groups, SPSC provides a blueprint for success.

Dovetailing with these comments, Capt. Brain Florence (United), an SPSC member and a former committee chair, reviewed how the program has evolved. “We do a lot more than strike and strike prep,” he said, adding that today’s SPSC helps ALPA pilot groups “work smarter, not harder.”

OFFERING INSIGHTS

Workshop attendees heard from staff members of the Association’s Economic & Financial Analysis and Representation Departments who talked about recent trends in airline pilot collective bargaining and highlighted how important external factors, such as the
They also outlined common-sense rules SPSC volunteers should follow to protect themselves and their pilots.

Any kind of large-scale decision-making requires a pilot group to use a variety of communications tools to share information and access needed feedback. A panel of Communications Department staff members explained that successful media relations, pilot group communications, web and digital support, and social media efforts require coordination. From the use of Thunderclap message campaigns to third-party ad placements, the panel showcased the variety of tools employed in recent contract negotiations at Air Wisconsin, Frontier, Hawaiian, JetBlue, and Spirit.

Representatives from ALPA’s Government Affairs Department examined the impact lawmakers have on the collective bargaining process and how pilot advocacy can influence national and international policy decisions. Participating pilots learned about computer-based tools like SPACS, which allows pilot groups to determine where members are concentrated. In addition, they heard a panel discussion featuring ALPA members involved in the latest Hawaiian and Mesa contract negotiations and the Alaska–Virgin America arbitration.

**TAKING NOTES**
Assessing the workshop, pilots who attended offered their take on its true value. Capt. Andrew Ross (Envoy Air), his pilot group’s Pilot-to-Pilot chair, previously attended SPSC training in 2015. He said he returned because he particularly enjoyed the camaraderie at the event and the motivational tenor of the training segments. “This year’s presenters did a great job pumping everyone up and making sure we understand how to utilize ALPA to its fullest.”

“We’re jumpstarting our SPSC and trying to better align ourselves with pilots from other airlines,” said Capt. Erin Jackson (PSA), her pilot group’s executive administrator and communications officer. Jackson said she wanted to better understand how to reorganize the SPSC functions within her pilot group. Many of the previous SPSC leaders at PSA have either retired or moved on to larger airlines.

Capt. Mark Gaudet (Jazz Aviation), his pilot group’s new Communications Committee chair, is hoping to raise the level of engagement of his fellow members. He noted that many of the SPSC resources he learned about will be helpful in achieving this goal. “Plus, I’ve never been to the home office of the Association before to see what’s here, so I jumped at the opportunity,” he added.

F/O Jason Barton (Frontier) and his pilot group are new to ALPA. A member of the Frontier pilots’ newly established SPSC, Barton wanted “an overview of how ALPA works and to look at what we can take away as a pilot group.” He said he was particularly interested in duplicating some of the strategies outlined during the Communications Department’s presentation.

Capt. Dustin McGrath (Spirit), also a member of his pilot group’s SPSC, noted that he was flying for Atlantic Southeast Airlines at the time the Spirit pilots were on strike. He acknowledged that he attended the workshop to get “an overview of all the resources available and to network with pilots from other airlines.”

**WHAT DO PILOTS DO IN COMMON WITH FOOTBALL PLAYERS?**
In a special presentation, George Atallah, assistant executive director of external affairs for the National Football League Players Association (NFLPA), spoke at ALPA’s Strategic Preparedness and Strike Committee Workshop about challenges his union is facing and the issues ALPA and the NFLPA have in common, like the need for ongoing strategic communications.

Atallah observed that in both the NFL and the airline industry, incremental gains in contract negotiations help generations of workers in ways they often don’t realize. He discussed how both organizations are working to advance safety where they work. Talking specifically about airline pilots, Atallah noted, “I know when I get on a plane that I think about the skills and education you have to get me where I need to go. Harnessing that with unity is a powerful tool.”

**Capt. Erin Jackson (PSA)**

“This we’re jumpstarting our SPSC and trying to better align ourselves with pilots from other airlines.”

—John Perkinson, Senior Staff Writer
‘Made in Canada’
ALPA Canada Hosts Negotiations Training Seminar

In late November 2017, more than 20 negotiators from almost all of ALPA’s Canadian pilot groups stepped back from the bargaining table or preparing for bargaining and into the classroom for a refresher course on the best negotiating tools and tactics available at the “Made in Canada” Negotiations Training Seminar in Ottawa, Ont. The seminar was coordinated and presented by the Association’s national Collective Bargaining Committee and ALPA’s Representation Department. Association staff members from various departments, including Representation, Communications, and Economic & Financial Analysis, joined members of the Collective Bargaining Committee to give presentations during the three-day seminar.

Capt. Dan Adamus (Jazz Aviation), ALPA Canada president, kicked off the meeting by welcoming the negotiating committee members. He then provided an overview of the Canadian pilot groups in negotiations and spoke about the ongoing organizing efforts in Canada. “Whether it’s bargaining a full collective agreement or settling a grievance, the education our pilots receive here will help them in all of their endeavours,” he said.

Capt. Phil Otis (United), ALPA’s national Collective Bargaining Committee chairman, and Capt. Paul Peace (Jazz Aviation), a committee member, discussed the role that the Collective Bargaining Committee plays in assisting ALPA negotiating committees that are preparing for contract negotiations during their presentation. “The committee offers negotiations-related assistance and resources, ensures that contract enforcement and grievance efforts are coordinated, and provides direct support to all pilot groups. We’re tasked to help negotiators better understand their leadership team and assist pilots in constructive decision-making,” explained Otis.

Seminar attendees learned about a number of issues that affect bargaining—how to build the structure and framework for negotiations, ways to gain leverage in the current bargaining environment, the importance of team building, and how to create and execute plans and share them with their pilots.

During the first two days of the meeting, negotiating committee members teamed up and participated in several hands-on bargaining exercises. These exercises were instrumental in helping them prepare for real-life negotiations. “This program provided excellent tools for pilot negotiators and leaders to take back to our respective groups and help us in our various projects,” said F/O Randy Eliston (Jazz Aviation), his pilot group’s Negotiating Committee chairman. “Of course, the best part of the program is the opportunity for ALPA pilots to come together and discuss what has worked and what hasn’t worked for our airlines at the bargaining table.”

On the final day of the seminar, negotiators took part in a full collective bargaining simulation to apply what they learned. “Having been on the bargaining side for the pilots in the past, participating on the management side was a particularly valuable opportunity, and I took full advantage of role-playing,” said Capt. Klaus Petak (First Air), his pilot group’s Negotiating Committee chairman.

In closing the seminar Adamus noted, “The best part of a meeting like this is the common theme in all our discussions that we operate as a ‘pilot community’ within ALPA, sharing our collective knowledge and successes with each other. This is what’s best for our profession and what will keep us climbing.”

—Katy Adams, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist
JetBlue Pilot Communicates Via Smoke Signals

By John Perkinson, Senior Staff Writer

A hallmark of effective communications is ensuring that the message is seen by the intended audience. So when Capt. Chris Orr (JetBlue) and the other members of his precision aerobatics team have something they want to convey, they post it in the most visible location available—the sky.

Orr, a New York-based E190 captain, is also a slot pilot for the GEICO Skytypers Air Show Team, which executes a variety of low-level tactical maneuvers and sky typing using six North American SNJ-2s (a Navy version of the more familiar T-6 Texan). Performing at events like EAA AirVenture Oshkosh and Sun ’n Fun, Orr and his fellow pilots thrill air show audiences with simulated dog fights and head-to-head passes, all while flying vintage World War II planes. “It’s a real blast flying all of that history,” said Orr.

A former F-14 Tomcat and A-4 Skyhawk pilot, Orr found out about the GEICO Skytypers from a fellow Navy airman who was flying for the team and noted that it’s based in Farmingdale, N.Y., not far from Orr’s home on Long Island. The JetBlue pilot soon enlisted but acknowledged that learning to fly the aircraft is no cakewalk. “The SNJ-2 is a real handful,” said Orr, adding, “It has a reputation for ground loop.” The potential for yawing and rolling near the prop arc and the response to turbulence require that the airplanes maintain some separation. Plus, Orr had no previous experience with tailwheel aircraft.

To get better acquainted with the plane’s traits, Orr ferried the SNJ-2s to air shows for several years. Once he felt confident flying the aircraft in all kinds of weather, the commanding officer/flight lead promoted Orr, who’s been a regular at air shows ever since.

Formed in 1977, the GEICO Skytypers team begins each new year with ground school and spring training. Orr noted that the group is organized like a naval squadron and that most of the pilots have been flying together for many years. “We can get spooled up pretty quickly,” he remarked.

Before each show, these writers in the sky engage in a team briefing along with a talk through and walkthrough, and demonstrations are followed by a thorough debriefing. Orr remarked that the team typically performs 15 shows a year, which is frequent enough that it “forces you to stay proficient.”

The six SNJ-2s fly in a line at 9,500 feet, emitting dots of smoke “like an old matrix printer,” said Orr. A central computer determines the routine details, and electronic signals control the smoke output. As compared to more conventional skywriting, “We type 17 times faster and generate messages with 20 to 25 characters in less than two minutes,” he noted. Messages can be 1,000 feet tall and, on a clear day, are visible from 15 miles in any direction.

The SNJ-2s used by the GEICO Skytypers were built between 1940 and 1941 and have been fully restored and modified with 180-gallon fuel tanks, allowing the props to fly for more than four hours. Originally used as trainers during World War II, these planes each weigh 5,500 pounds and sport a 600-horsepower Pratt and Whitney R-1340-AN-1 nine-cylinder radial engine.

In addition to flying, the GEICO Skytypers team, which received the International Council of Air Show’s 2016 Art Scholl Showmanship Award, offers its time to a program called “The Sky’s the Limit,” which promotes aviation to youth groups and schools. “It’s a great organization and something special to be a part of,” said Orr.

A JetBlue pilot since 2005 and a former Comair pilot, Orr also has an extensive military background. After three years in the Army, he resigned and headed for Navy flight school in Pensacola, Fla. He completed two tours on the aircraft carrier, USS Constellation, making 300 carrier-arrested landings and flying 35 combat missions. Leaving the Navy, Orr flew C-130 Hercules for the New York Air National Guard for two more combat tours before retiring as a lieutenant colonel.
Recently Retired

2017

Fellow ALPA Members. Every year we say goodbye to many proud airline pilots who retire from the ranks of airline flying. They have served the profession during some of our industry's most turbulent times. We would like to recognize their service in Air Line Pilot.

Capt. Tim Canoll
ALPA President

Capt. Ken Binder
ALPA R2H Committee Chairman

Compiled from information provided by ALPA's Membership Administration Department. Names only appear once in the print version.
To some, New Year’s resolutions are simply loose guidelines that easily fall by the wayside as willpower starts to dwindle. Not with ALPA pilots. Resolutions become a way of life. Below is a compilation of a few resolutions from ALPA pilot groups for the coming year.

1. The pilots of Air Transat will ensure they continue to be recognized for their hard work, dedication, and professionalism.

2. 2018: A year of turbulence, transition, and rebirth for Atlantic Southeast pilots.

3. The pilots of Calm Air will be well prepared for upcoming contract negotiations in 2018.

4. In 2018, the Canadian North Master Executive Council will continue to strive for open communication and participation.

5. The pilots of CommutAir will focus on the growth of their all-jet fleet and pilot retention. It’s a great time to join CommutAir and be part of a fast-growing team of aviation professionals.

6. Compass pilots resolve to be the best fee-for-departure carrier on the West Coast in 2018.

7. In 2018, #ScopeMatters to Delta pilots, who will strenuously oppose internal and external outsourcing threats, including Middle East carriers Emirates, Qatar, and Etihad; attacks on scope; and inequitable distribution of joint-venture flying and growth.

8. 2018 will be a year in which ExpressJet pilots will say they’re proud to work for ExpressJet Airlines again.

9. In 2018, FedEx Express pilots vow to get to their destinations safely overnight, positively impacting the world’s commerce with professionalism and integrity.

10. In 2018, First Air pilots would love to have a fully functioning electronic flight bag program. Then the pilot group can return to being First Air and not last air since they’re the only ones who still seem to use paper charts!

11. The Frontier pilots resolve to enter the pattern of their fellow aviators with a new industry-standard contract in 2018! #frontierdealnow

12. In the new year, the Hawaiian pilots will build a stronger and more solid relationship with their members and their families.


14. Three years is too long! It’s time for JetBlue pilots to get the contract these professional pilots deserve.

15. In 2018, Kelowna Flightcraft pilots look forward to seeing their company secure a long-term contract that will provide for future job stability.

16. Mesa pilots’ collective focus this year centers around contract implementation, education, and enforcement.

17. It’s a great time to be at PSA! Along with making contract improvements, in 2018 the pilot group is helping the airline retain pilots and maintain competitiveness in recruiting by launching a new pilot-powered website, PSApilotCareers.com.


19. Sun Country pilots welcomed the new year with a new owner. Here’s to continued safety and success!

20. In 2018, Trans States pilots are working to achieve contract improvements that reflect their commitment to professionalism and safe operations in an increasingly positive-trending environment.

21. The United Master Executive Council will continue working with fellow ALPA pilots to enhance unionism and unity across the aviation industry and ensure that labor’s contributions toward achieving and improving the world’s safest mode of travel are fully recognized.

22. Wasaya pilots will continue to focus on recruitment and retention in 2018.

23. In 2018, WestJet pilots want to come together in unity and work together for their common goals and for the betterment of the entire profession.
ALPA Resources & Contact Numbers

Executive Vice Presidents
For more information on which pilot groups executive vice presidents represent, visit www.alpa.org/evp

Capt. Rick Dominguez (Delta) Executive Administrator
Capt. Paul Ryder (ExpressJet) National Resource Coordinator
Capt. Andrew Massey (Delta)
Capt. Russell Sklenka (FedEx Express)
Capt. Mike McMackin (JetBlue)
Capt. Richard Meier (ExpressJet) Atlantic Southeast, Compass, ExpressJet, PSA, Sun Country, Virgin America
Capt. Sean Creed (Spirit) Air Wisconsin, Alaska, Commuter, Mesa, Spirit, Trans States
Capt. Dan Adamus (Jazz Aviation) Air Georgian, Air Transat, Bearskin, Calm Air, Canadian North, Encore, First Air, Jazz Aviation, Kelowna Flightcraft, Wasaya, Westjet
Capt. William Couette Vice President–Administration/Secretary
Capt. Randy Helling Vice President–Finance/Treasurer
Capt. Joe DePete First Vice President
Capt. Tim Canoll President

ALPA Sudoku (http://download.cnet.com/Sudoku-Generator/3000-2111_4-10733911.html)
Complete the sudoku puzzle so that each column, each row, and each of the nine 3×3 sub-grids that compose the grid contain all the digits from 1 to 9.
The solution to this month’s ALPA sudoku can be found on page 15.
Prefer other puzzle types? Tell us what you think. E-mail Magazine@alpa.org.

6 2
3 7
5 6
9 1
4
8
3
7
ALPA Information Numbers

The following ALPA resources may be reached by e-mail or by dialing, toll-free, 1-888-359-2572 (1-888-FLY-ALPA). Once connected, press the # key on your phone and dial the last four digits of the number listed below. However, the ALPA main number, ASPEN, Member Insurance, and Membership Administration numbers need to be dialed directly.

Accident Investigation (EAS@alpa.org) 703-689-4132
Accounting and Finance (Finance@alpa.org) 703-689-4144
Air Line Pilot (Magazine@alpa.org) 703-689-4140
Airline Pilot Group, Inc. 570-487-2701
ALPA Aeromedical Office (AMO) 703-689-4148
ALPA Main Number 703-689-2270
ALPA Memorbabilia (SMDR@alpa.org) 703-689-4148
ALPA PAC 202-797-4033
ASPEN 703-689-4220
Balloting (Balloting@alpa.org) 703-689-4173
Cashiering (Cashiering@alpa.org) 703-689-4148
Communications (Communications@alpa.org) 703-689-4144
Computer Help Line (HelpDesk@alpa.org) 703-689-4357
Council Services (CSC@alpa.org) 703-689-4173
Discipline and Discharge (Rep@alpa.org) 703-689-4226
Economic and Financial Analysis (EFA@alpa.org) 703-689-4289
Election Dates LEC/MEC 703-689-4212
Engineering and Air Safety (EAS@alpa.org) 703-689-4226
FAA Enforcement or Medical Certificate Action (Rep@alpa.org) 703-689-4226
Government Affairs (GovernmentAffairs@alpa.org) 202-797-4033
Human Resources (HumanResources@alpa.org) 703-689-4262
Information Technology and Services (ITServices@alpa.org) 703-689-4134
Legal (Legal@alpa.org) 202-797-4096 703-689-4326
Member Insurance (Insurance@alpa.org) 1-800-746-2572
Membership Administration (Membership@alpa.org) 1-888-359-2572 (1-888-FLY-ALPA), option 3
IT Operations and Services (ITOS@alpa.org) 703-689-4245
Organizing (OrganizingInfo@alpa.org) 703-689-4179
Publishing and Design Services (Publishing@alpa.org) 703-481-4441
Purchasing (Purchasing@alpa.org) 703-689-4319
Representation (Rep@alpa.org) 703-689-4235
Real Estate (RealEstateDept@alpa.org) 703-689-4105
Retirement and Insurance (RI@alpa.org) 703-689-4114
Strategic Member Development and Resources (SMDR@alpa.org) 703-481-4467
System Board of Adjustment (Rep@alpa.org) 703-689-4226

Membership Administration

To obtain membership account information or to update your records or your postal or e-mail address via the Internet, go to the My ALPA area of www.alpa.org/memberaccount; or dial the toll-free number 1-888-359-2572 (1-888-FLY-ALPA) and choose menu option 3. Listed below are the telephone numbers of MEC offices.

Air Georgian–GPN MEC 204-979-1732
Air Transat–TSC MEC 1-888-337-2033
Air Transport International–ATI MEC 507-283-8838
Air Wisconsin–ARW MEC 1-800-ALPA-ARW
Alaska–ALA MEC 206-241-3138
Atlantic Southeast–ASA MEC 404-209-8566
Bearskin–BRS MEC 807-628-5683
Calm Air–CMA MEC 204-471-1000
Canadian North–CNP MEC 780-718-6012
CanJet–CJA MEC 1-800-959-1751
CommutAir–CMT MEC 519-832-7494
*Pilot group in custodianship

Compass–CPZ MEC 952-853-2373
Delta–DAL MEC 404-763-4925
Encore–WEN MEC 867-445-1756
Endeavor Air–EDV MEC 1-855-EDV-ALPA
Envoy Air–ENE MEC 817-685-7474
ExpressJet–XJT MEC 281-987-3636
FedEx Express–FDX MEC 901-752-8749
First Air–FAB MEC 1-877-459-3272
Frontier–FFT MEC 720-245-7364
Hawaiian–HAL MEC 808-833-2572
ASL Airlines–AIS MEC 808-838-3088
Jazz Aviation–JAZ MEC 1-800-561-9576
JetBlue–JBU MEC 603-303-2195
Kelowna Flightcraft–KFC MEC 877-373-5131, ext. 6225
Mesa–MAG MEC 602-306-1116
Piedmont–PDT MEC 339-987-1277
PSA–PSA MEC 703-481-4444
Spirit–SPA MEC 1-855-SPA-ALPA
Sun Country–SCA MEC 852-835-2393
Trans State–TSA MEC 412-780-9036
United–UAL MEC 847-292-1700
Virgin America–VJR MEC 435-962-0951
Wasaya–WSG MEC 807-624-7270
WestJet–WJA MEC 403-464-3599

*Editor in Chief
Sharon R. Bhagwan
Associate Managing & Production Editor
Susan Fager
Senior Staff Writer
John Perkinson
Senior Advocacy Writer
Linda Shotwell
Senior Aviation Technical Writer
Christopher Freeze

Magazine/Graphic Designer
Dit Rutland
Web Coordinators
Chris Weaver, Suzi Fenton
Supervisor, Multimedia Productions
Eric Davis
Contributing Writers
Kevin Cuddihy, Corey Kuhn
ePublishing Coordinator
Mary Kennedy
Director of Communications
David Weaver
General Manager
Lori Garver

Air Line Pilot is not responsible for unsolicited manuscripts, photographs, or other materials. Unsolicited materials will be returned only if submitted with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Opinions expressed by authors do not necessarily represent official ALPA position or policy.

Subscriptions: Subscription rate for pilot members, $27.50, included in ALPA membership dues; for students, $41; for U.S. nonmembers, $55; for foreign, $71.50. Residents of the state of Washington must add 8.8 percent sales tax. To subscribe go to www.alpa.org/subscriptions or call 703-481-4460.

Advertising: Any advertising appearing in Air Line Pilot cannot be construed as being an endorsement by the Air Line Pilots Association, International or its members. The publisher reserves the right to reject, discontinue, or edit any advertisement. For advertising information, contact Advertising@alpa.org.

Address Changes: To report address changes, contact Membership@alpa.org or call 1-888-359-2572 (1-888-FLY-ALPA) and choose menu option 3, 3.

Air Line Pilot is printed in the United States and published for professional airline pilots in the United States and Canada who are members of the Air Line Pilots Association, International.

ALPA Headquarters: 1625 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036
Postmaster: Send address changes to Air Line Pilot, 535 Herndon Parkway, Herndon, VA 20170-5226.

Other Organizations
ALPA Aeromedical Office 303-341-4435
Connexus Credit Union 1-800-940-5025

ALPA Accident/Serious Incident Hotline
If you are involved in an accident, incident, or alleged violation of a federal aviation regulation, contact your local or central air safety chairman, regional safety chairman, or the worldwide ALPA accident/safety incident hotline at 202-797-4180 (collect calls are accepted) for an immediate response 24 hours per day. As a backup number, call 703-892-4180.

To report a safety problem or airspace system deficiency, call 1-800-424-2470 or e-mail EAS@alpa.org.

2018 EBCB Schedule
The Association’s Election and Ballot Certification Board’s schedule for counting ballots is February 9, March 9, April 10, May 10, June 8, July 10, August 10, September 10, October 10, November 9, and December 10.

Any ALPA member in good standing may be present as an observer during any meeting. Contact the Association’s Membership and Council Services Department for scheduling.

January-February 2018 Air Line Pilot » 63
TAKE CARE OF YOUR GROUND CREW.

ALPA MEMBER INSURANCE
Offering unique products designed by pilots for pilots to our members for more than 50 years.

01 "Loss of License" Disability Insurance
02 Life Insurance: 10- and 20-Year Level Term and/or Group Term
03 Accidental Death & Dismemberment Insurance
04 Dental Insurance
05 Critical Illness Insurance
06 Accident Insurance

Manage your account and view plan brochures at memberinsurance.alpa.org. Some plans may be subject to open enrollment or qualifying event.

MAKE SURE ALPA INSURANCE IS PART OF YOUR FLIGHT PLAN.
Call us today at 800-746-2572 or visit us on the web at memberinsurance.alpa.org.

AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION, INT’L
A member service of Air Line Pilot.