

Negotiations took center stage in 2011 as the Air Wisconsin pilots worked to negotiate much-needed contract improvements. In 2003, the pilots ratified a con-

limits on management flying, implementation of a Training Review Board, and an improved recall process for furloughed pilots. Most importantly, the pilots have successfully defended against management's concessionary requests and have continued to make contract improvements.

During the first quarter of 2012, negotiations will focus on enhancing pilot work rules in the Scheduling and Hours of Service sections. In Scheduling, the pilots will propose solutions based upon current regulations and will modify those as necessary to comply with any new flight-time/duty-time limits that may apply—including reducing time away from base, reducing maximum credit in a bid, improving the reserve system, and more. The focus for the Hours of Service section is twofold—to provide pilots with a better quality of life and to improve safety by implementing more realistic duty-time limits.


The pilots hope to move on to the pure economic sections—pay, benefits, and other areas—by the second quarter and are optimistic that a tentative agreement can be presented to the pilot group for ratification by the end of the year.

Assisting Air Wisconsin pilots in their collective bargaining efforts are ALPA pilots from Mesa, Piedmont, Pinnacle, PSA, and Trans States. As members of ALPA's US Airways Express Pilots Alliance (USEPA), pilot leaders from Air Wisconsin and the other five ALPA pilot groups have been working together during the past year to promote the careers of US Airways Express pilots, develop favorable bargaining patterns,

and harmonize their collective bargaining agreements. This level of coordination is especially important given the volatility of the regional airline industry and competition among the carriers for flying.

"The regional industry is capricious in nature," Swindell says. "While we are focused on issues close to home such as improving our collective bargaining agreement, we are also keeping a watchful eye on the industry to ensure that Air Wisconsin remains competitive in the marketplace."

Additional USEPA initiatives include promoting job security and streamlining safety programs within the US Airways Express brand. Should flying shift from one USEPA carrier to another, pilot leaders are committed to working together to address the issue. In the event that another carrier begins to furlough, Air Wisconsin pilots will work with management to set up preferential hiring of affected ALPA pilots.

Notable safety advancements at Air Wisconsin over the past year include the implementation of a FOQA program with ALPA as a full participant, an AQP, and a new ASAP that improves the review process and enriches the overall program. 

ARW at a Glance

- **Pilots Joined ALPA:** 1982 as a result of the Union of Professional Airmen merger with ALPA
- **Number of pilots:** 665
- **Operations:** Nearly 500 daily departures to 26 states and 3 Canadian provinces; with service to 70 cities throughout North America, the airline carries nearly 6 million passengers per year
- **Headquarters:** Appleton, Wisc.
- **Domiciles:** New York (LGA); Norfolk, Va. (ORF); Philadelphia, Pa. (PHL); Raleigh-Durham, N.C. (RDU); Washington, D.C. (DCA)
- **Fleet:** 71 Canadair 50-seat regional jets (CRJ200s)

Air Wisconsin

Pilots Focus On Contract Improvements, Bolstering Safety Programs

By Lydia Jakub, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

cessionary agreement in an attempt to retain the code-share agreement with United Airlines. The company lost the United flying, invested in US Airways during its bankruptcy, and began flying as US Airways Express in 2005. Negotiations for a new agreement began in October 2010, and the pilots are demanding a return on their investment.

"The loan is past due, and we are determined to collect on the investment we made to ensure the viability of Air Wisconsin," says Capt. Richard Swindell, chairman of the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC). "Our bargaining goals are simple: pay increases, work rule enhancements, and significant quality-of-life improvements for our pilots."

The pilots' contract became amendable in October 2011, approximately one year after discussions began. In preparing for negotiations, the pilots established a two-year game plan to accomplish their bargaining goals. They are now a little more than halfway through the process and have made substantial progress: 17 of the 30 contract sections have either been opened or tentatively agreed upon. Of these, they have reached tentative agreements (TA) with management on 9 sections and have 5 sections with only a few remaining items. Highlights of improvements made to date include



Capt. Corey Stutsman, left, and F/O Ben Grant, who are wearing pink ties in observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.