

# Canadian North

## MEC Completes 2013 To-do List; Enters Negotiations a Year Early

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The Canadian North Master Executive Council (MEC) completed key items on its 2013 to-do list thanks to the hard work of its pilot volunteers. And despite the rigors of piloting in unpredictable winter weather conditions and serving remote and rugged northern Canadian territories, pilot volunteers also opened negotiations a year early.

"To say that 2013 was a busy year is an understatement," says Capt. Chris Kampen, the pilots' MEC chairman, reflecting on the pilot group's 2013 accomplishments before turning his focus to 2014.

A key quality-of-life enhancement that took flight in 2013 is a pilot porting system, designed to build lines that begin and/or end in a pilot's home city rather than transporting pilots to a starting base. "Launching a pilot porting system out of Yellowknife, Ottawa, and Iqaluit proved to be a great way to attract and retain pilots who live in different cities," Kampen adds.

Establishing a Professional Standards Committee was another priority for the MEC in 2013. The committee provides assistance to Canadian North pilots who face additional stressors flying in extremely challenging conditions. A Pilot Assistance Committee is also now staffed and should be fully functional later in 2014. The MEC also created a much-needed Mentor Committee to

help new-hire pilots transition to the airline.

Ticking off another to-do, the MEC developed a post-accident/incident checklist to supplement ALPA's Worldwide Accident Hotline "orange" card. The MEC identified the specific issues endemic to Canadian North operations and developed a reference tool that addresses the airline's fleet and the nuances of flying in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, which can include landings and takeoffs on remote ice and gravel runways in the Arctic.

Developing a functional MEC website was another completed item from last year's list. "Our website provides access to our ALPA grievance DTS site," says Capt. Olivier Goudreau, the pilot group's MEC vice chairman. "The MEC wanted to make it as easy as possible for the pilots to file a grievance when they feel their contract work rules have been violated."

As for the airline, Canadian North increased its fleet size to seven 737-200s and seven B-737-300s, with two more -300s scheduled for delivery. Canadian North will be the first operator of a B-737-300 quick-change airplane in which the seats are palletized and installed with a moveable bulkhead, giving the airplane more versatility transporting passengers and cargo. The -300s move 70,000 passengers a month.

As 2013 wound down, the pilots entered interest-based negotiations a full year ahead of schedule. "It just made sense strategically," Kampen says. "The company

is doing really well, and we want to capitalize on that momentum. Major client contracts are due in 2014, so it's important to have costs finalized to reflect long-term labor peace as the company prepares those bids."

The company's implementation of a new software program, Merlot.aero, which optimizes daily airplane and crew usage, won't be fully functional until spring 2014, so the MEC is using this opportunity to negotiate the inclusion of a preferential bidding system into the program. "We

have traditionally only been able to bid our days off," Kampen explains, "so it would be a huge accomplishment to implement a program that provides more flexibility in bidding our days off and the types of flying, thus allowing our pilots more time with their families and loved ones."

The Canadian North MEC may be one of the new kids on the ALPA block, but it's achieved great success working with ALPA's professional staff to ensure that all of ALPA's resources are tailored to meet the pilot group's needs. And as 2014 progresses, the MEC is confident that it will be checking more and more off its to-do list—one item at a time. 

### CNP at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 2011

Number of pilots: 145

Bases: Edmonton and Calgary, Alb.

Headquarters: Yellowknife, NT, with offices in Edmonton, Alb.

Operations: Scheduled flights and cargo services throughout Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, as well as charter operations throughout Canada and the United States

Fleet: B-737-200s, B-737-300s, and Dash 8-100s



Capt. Olivier Goudreau, left, and Capt. Dale Clarke, right.