

Hawaiian

Collaboration Fuels Expansion

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After several years of double-digit growth regarding the number of pilots, fleet size, and routes, Hawaiian Airlines slowed its pace slightly in 2013, but the pilot group and management continue to enjoy a collaborative partnership that has paid dividends for both sides.

The pilots and management negotiated new pay rates related to the planned acquisition of a new aircraft type, ratified a series of letters of agreement with mid-contract improvements in several areas, and began operating even more flights to new destinations along the Pacific Rim. And in 2014 Hawaiian is poised to enter what could be its biggest market yet—mainland China. With its code-share arrangement with China Airlines, Hawaiian has been authorized to begin flying to Beijing in April.

Among the other changes, the airline closed its long-time pilot domicile in Seattle, Wash., and appears to have halted—at least for now—plans to expand its flying to the eastern United States.

“Our mission as a Master Executive Council (MEC) is to advocate for our pilots. We help management where it’s appropriate, and make sure our crews are recognized as an essential component of the airline and are compensated accordingly,” says Capt. Lem Terrell, the pilots’ MEC chairman.

Hawaiian pilots started 2013 by ratifying a letter of agreement (LOA) that set pay rates and work rules for

new narrowbody airplanes. Soon after, the airline ordered 16 Airbus A321 NEOs, with options for nine more. The fuel-efficient A321s are expected to begin arriving in 2016.

The NEOs will be a mid-size addition to the airline’s fleet of B-717s, B-767s, and Airbus A330s. They will also augment existing transpacific service and could be used to open new routes between the islands and smaller-market U.S. mainland cities.

In July, the MEC negotiated eight new LOAs with management with improvements for check airmen, pilots on disability, deadhead travel benefits, upgrades for pilots under training freezes, and protections for pilots who participated in the airline’s first-ever Line Operations Safety Audit.

In addition to the upcoming new Beijing route, in 2013 Hawaiian began serving Auckland, New Zealand; its fifth Japanese destination, Sendai; and Taipei, Taiwan. It ended service to Manila in the Philippines in July.

The airline had planned to begin operating a wholly owned feeder carrier called “Ohana by Hawaiian” to extend its reach into smaller communities in the islands. The operating certificate to do so, by the subsidiary Empire Airlines in Utah, was delayed, however, due to the federal government shutdown. Proving flights were expected to begin in December 2013 or January 2014.

Like other ALPA pilot groups, the Hawaiian pilots have been gearing up for the implementation of the FAA’s new flight- and duty-

time rules. The MEC held a series of flight-time/duty-time workshops for pilots in December. “FAR 117 will affect everything we do. We have interisland pilots flying



PHOTO BY F/O BRIAN SHIROTA

Capt. Koichiro Kono standing in front of a Hawaiian B-717 during sunset at Kona International Airport on the island of Hawaii.

multiple legs each day, and at the same time we have augmented crews flying some of the longest overwater routes in the world. Once again, we’ll need to work with the company to ensure that everyone understands the new rules and that they are being adhered to properly,” Terrell says.

Looking to the future, the MEC has already appointed a new Negotiating Committee, which has begun preparing for Section 6 bargaining, even though the pilots’ contract is not amendable until 2015.

The MEC is also preparing for the possibility of a future merger or other corporate transaction, as Hawaiian’s rapid growth and steady profitability has recently attracted new investors. The MEC’s goal is to have in place a strategy, funds, and volunteers in the event such a transaction occurs.

“The pilots look forward to continuing their collaborative relationship with management and to seeing the airline’s fleet and operations grow; 2014 looks to be a good year,” says Terrell. 🌊

HAL at a Glance

Number of pilots: 625

Headquarters: Honolulu, Hawaii

Pilot base: Honolulu, Hawaii

Operations: Hawaiian operates more than 150 daily flights connecting the islands of Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii. It offers nonstop service to the Hawaiian islands from 10 cities on the U.S. mainland and also has direct, nonstop flights from Honolulu to American Samoa, Tahiti, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Japan

Fleet: 18 B-717-200s; 14 B-767-300ERs; and 16 A330-200s, with 7 more on order and options for 5 more. On order: 6 A350-300s, to be delivered 2017–2020; 16 A321 NEOs, with options for 9 more. Hawaiian also owns 3 ATR 42 turboprops that will be operated by a regional subsidiary