

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

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

Despite these ongoing challenges, the ASA Master Executive

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Atlantic Southeast

### Pilots Build on Past Successes To Secure Future Contract Improvements

By David Fisher, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**At SkyWest shareholders’ meeting, from left, are Capts. Rick Bernskoetter, Maury Gottlieb, Andrew Topp (kneeling), Nick Tomlin, Chris Mankamy, Seth Heckard, and Steve Prescott.**

### ASA at a Glance

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