

Delta

Moving the Best Practices Forward for a Better Future

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Capt. Archie Smiles, left, and F/O Jon Agne during a flight in a B-757.

DAL at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: Delta—1934, Northwest—1932

Merger: Delta merged with Northwest on Oct. 29, 2008. NWA is now a wholly owned subsidiary pending full operational integration

Number of Pilots: 12,555

Operations: Delta and its Northwest subsidiary fly domestically and internationally with 355 destinations in 64 countries (includes Delta Connection carriers)

Pilot Bases: Minneapolis; Los Angeles; Detroit; Atlanta, Training; Seattle; New York City; Memphis; Salt Lake City; Cincinnati

Headquarters: Atlanta, Ga.

Fleet: MD-88s, MD-90s, B-737s, B-757s, B-767s, B-777s, A319s, A320s, A330s, B-747s, DC-9s

Since the January 2009 merger of the Northwest and Delta Master Executive Councils, pilot leaders have focused on integrating the best practices of both pre-merger MECs. Throughout 2009, the integration has been successful, but has also faced challenges. The MEC has maintained its focus on the mission to reverse the decline of, to stabilize, and to improve on the pilots' pay, working conditions, retirement, benefits, and job security—always mindful of safety and security.

In the midst of a global recession, ensuring the relevancy of labor within a worldwide framework is indeed a significant challenge. The Delta MEC works to establish relevancy through a philosophy of proactive engagement.

The pilot leaders remain engaged in numerous legislative matters that may affect Delta pilots. The pilots' Government Affairs Committee works with the International Affairs and Alliance Committee chairman, ALPA National, and many others on legislative and regulatory issues.

Much work was invested to garner bipartisan support for the Worker, Retiree, and Employer Recovery Act of 2008, which provided current and former employees of Delta, Northwest, and others who received bankruptcy-related payments the ability to contribute those funds to a Roth IRA.

Whether it is supporting funding of the FAA reauthorization bill, opposing New York area airport slot auctions, or opposing a hostile takeover attempt, the Delta pilots are active on Capitol Hill.

Proactive engagement in industry-related issues is important in strengthening pilot careers. Following the merger, KLM joined Delta's joint venture agreement with Air France. The Delta MEC worked collaboratively with its union counterparts at Air France and KLM to model a pilot protocol that all the involved unions unanimously adopted. The concepts addressed in the protocol are information sharing, the pilots' share of flying in the joint venture, and mutual assistance and representativeness.

To leverage the strength of the Delta pilot group, it was important to carry out a smooth transition to a single MEC and a seamless integration of the committee

structures. Quickly after merging, a policy manual review committee was established to incorporate the best practices of both pilot groups and present recommendations for a new Delta MEC policy manual. The result was a cohesive document that was unanimously adopted in October.

In keeping with the MEC philosophy of proactive engagement, MEC meetings often include guest speakers. During the past year, speakers have included former ALPA president and current FAA Administrator Randolph Babbitt, U.S. Department of State Deputy Assistant Secretary for Transportation Affairs John Byerly, and professor and author Thomas Kochan, Ph. D.

Most of Delta's and Northwest's standing committees have been consolidated. Many of the committees have had enormous workloads during integration. While every committee

has worked hard to ensure a seamless transition, the Transition Working Group, Scheduling, Training, Retirement and Insurance, and Communications Committees have played major roles during the transition. The following are a few highlights of the work these committees have undertaken:

- The Training Committee has worked closely with Flight Operations to integrate policy and procedures for the two airlines.
- Bid assist facilitators helped to transition pre-merger Northwest pilots to the Delta PBS (scheduling) system.
- The R&I Committee and staff worked tirelessly through the first benefits enrollment to educate all pilots on available options. A number of outreach efforts—including 3,500 visits to a webinar—addressed more than 7,000 pilot inquiries.

The Delta MEC will continue to pursue and implement many initiatives to improve the careers of Delta pilots. The MEC seeks opportunities and remains committed to advancing the interests of the pilot group it represents, the largest in the world. 🌐

Compass

A change to the current Delta MEC structure is the approaching representational restructuring for Compass Airlines pilots. On March 1, 2010, Compass will establish its own MEC.

Stay tuned for a pilot group profile on Compass in the March issue.