

**T**he pilots of Hawaiian Airlines are near the finish line of their 3-year effort to link their airline's superior performance to improved pay and benefits for its employees.

Negotiators for the pilots and management reached a tentative agreement on December 18 after nearly 2 weeks of grueling, nonstop bargaining under the supervision of federal mediators, including a marathon final session that lasted almost 36 hours.

The HAL Master Executive Council has unanimously endorsed the tentative agreement, and at press time the group was holding road shows to inform its members about the deal.

"The MEC believes this is the fair and affordable contract we fought so long for," says Capt. Eric Sampson, the MEC chairman. "It includes significant improvements in pay and retirement, while at the same time preserving and strengthening important work rules and other important areas of our contract. We're pleased we were able to develop new and innovative approaches that we believe bring value to both the pilots and the company."

The proposed 68-month agreement would include double-digit pay increases and profit-sharing for HAL's widebody and interisland pilots and increased company retirement contributions.

"One of the major goals for this round of contract negotiations was to ensure that every pilot whose defined benefit pension was frozen and replaced with a target benefit pension during the 2005 bankruptcy would receive the same benefit level they would have had under the old system, and we're confident that with these changes we will achieve that," Sampson adds.

By any standard, Hawaiian must be considered one of the most successful carriers in the United States. It consistently leads the industry in on-time performance and customer satisfaction, and earned record profits through the worst of the economic downturn that has staggered other airlines. In fact, HAL's record earnings make it among the three most profitable domestic airlines in the U.S.

HAL has added new B-717s to its interisland fleet, has installed new, fuel-

efficient winglets on its B-767s that save an estimated 5,000 pounds of fuel per flight segment, and is moving forward with a \$4 billion order from Airbus that will bring long-range A330s (and eventually A350s) into the fleet beginning this April. It is hiring hundreds of new employees as it adds new destinations and codeshare partners.

Hawaiian left bankruptcy in mid-2005 thanks in part to concessionary contracts with its pilots and other labor groups. Negotiations began in early 2007, and the bankruptcy-era agreement became amendable that summer. Management's negotiators insisted from the outset that any new contract be cost-neutral for the airline, but the pilots refused to accept the flat contract that management expected. Private mediation efforts failed in mid-2008, and the pilots and management entered federal mediation in September 2008.

In August 2009, the HAL MEC opened a strategic preparedness center next to Honolulu International Airport. In September, it took a strike authorization vote, and 94 percent of the airline's more than 400 pilots cast ballots. Of those voters, 98 percent gave their leaders the go-ahead to call a strike if the National Mediation Board (NMB) released the two parties into self-help.

By October the MEC decided talks had reached an impasse and asked the NMB to release Hawaiian from mediation. The Board, however, decided to give the two sides one more chance at reaching a deal and scheduled the mediation round in early December that ultimately resulted in a tentative agreement.

The MEC's slogan for its campaign was "Pupukahi I Holomua," a Hawaiian saying that can be translated to mean "pull together" or "unite as one." Sampson credits the pilots' unity as the decisive factor in the group's victory, and is looking forward to harnessing that momentum to help the airline grow.

"With Hawaiian having just celebrated its 80th anniversary, we're very excited about the future," Sampson says. "We're confident we will begin the New Year with a new contract that recognizes us as full partners in the company so that we can resume our efforts of keeping Hawaiian the best airline in the Pacific." 🌐

## Hawaiian

### Pilots Near the Finish Line

By **Rusty Ayers**, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**The crew in the B-717 cockpit is Capt. Kelly Kamaka and F/O Paul Morgan (formerly with Aloha). Kelly's brother Patrick was recently hired at Hawaiian and was also formerly at Aloha.**

### HAL at a Glance

**Pilots Joined ALPA:** 1948

**Number of Pilots:** 436

**Services:** As the only transpacific carrier based in the Hawaiian Islands, Hawaiian's widebody fleet flies to 17 destinations throughout the South Pacific and the West Coast, including Tahiti, Samoa, Australia, and the Philippines. The interisland fleet provides essential service for kama'aina (Hawaiian residents) and visitors alike between the islands of Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii.

**Fleet:** 14 B-767-300ERs, 4 B-767-300s, 19 B-717-200s. On order: 15 A330s, 12 A350XWBs