

Air Canada Jazz

Jazz Pilots Look To Achieve Industry-Leading Contract In 2010

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



PHOTO BY BEZUK

A Jazz CRJ.

ACJ at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1997

Number of Pilots: Approximately 1,550

Operations: Jazz carries approximately 27 million passengers per year on 800+ flights daily to 85 destinations across Canada and the United States

Pilot Bases: Halifax, N.S.; Vancouver, B.C.; Calgary, Alta.; Toronto, Ont.; Montreal, P.Q.

Headquarters: Halifax, N.S.

Fleet: 137 airplanes, including Dash 8-100/300s and Bombardier CRJ100/200/705s

The Jazz Master Executive Council leaders had a busy year in 2009. They recognized early on the strategic importance of ensuring that the pilots stay focused on their collective goals: diversifying their company's business, reducing dependency on the Air Canada Capacity Purchase Agreement (CPA), and ensuring that Jazz pilots have all the tools necessary to meet the requirements of modern airline operations.

For 2010, the pilots' strategic goals are nonetheless challenging, including negotiating an industry-leading collective bargaining agreement that balances compensation with lifestyle. "At the end of the day, if you don't have a profitable, growing, sustainable company, the collective bargaining piece is irrelevant," says Capt. Brian Shury, the MEC chairman. "Our focus has to be on finding a way to diversify the revenue base at Jazz."

To reach its goal, the Jazz MEC has brought together a negotiating committee whose members have an exceptional depth of knowledge and experience. "We believe there is absolutely no reason we cannot have an industry-leading contract that compensates our pilots fairly and at the same time serves as a foundation and catalyst to ensure that the company grows and is profitable," says

Shury. "None of these things happen because you wish they would or hope they would; we make our own luck." Negotiating Committee members are continuing to overhaul the pilots' contract through ongoing negotiating sessions with management.

The Association is standing firmly behind the Jazz pilots. In keeping with ALPA's history of supporting pilot groups when faced with management challenges, Jazz pilots received a \$5 million Major Contingency Fund grant from ALPA's Executive Board in 2009 to help them achieve a new contract.

Both the Jazz MEC and Strategic Preparedness Committee (SPC) have worked tirelessly to build a communica-

tions plan that effectively connects each of Jazz's five pilot bases and will evolve over the long haul so that the process extends beyond current negotiating activities. The communications plan takes into account the geographic challenges that many Jazz pilots experience because they are widely dispersed across Canada, from Victoria, British Columbia, to Halifax, Nova Scotia.

The Jazz SPC spent much of 2009 implementing a variety of resources in the ALPA toolbox, including a Pilot-to-Pilot® program with representatives from each Jazz base. "The complete support of the pilot group is imperative," says Capt. Barry Turner, chairman of the SPC. "Our campaign slogan is 'Strength In Unity.' Unity is the key to any successful undertaking. If you act alone, work against each other, or chose not to act at all, you cannot effect change or hope to challenge the status quo."

The pilots' communications strategy includes an ambitious coast-to-coast Family Awareness program that has proved highly successful, drawing hundreds of Jazz pilots and family members from across Canada. "One of the biggest challenges we face is to educate the newer pilots on the enormous value of belonging to ALPA," says Shury. "We believe that with the support of the pilots, their families, and the resources of ALPA, we will reach our goal of a contract that balances compensation and lifestyle in such a way that Jazz remains a career choice for our pilots."

"Jazz pilots have a common cause, and they can and will pull together toward their goal," Shury adds. The pilots continue to embrace the idea of unity, a concept they have tested in practice over the past year. "Our unity has given us the energy to develop and pursue objectives that are in the absolute best interest of our members," says Turner, "and that are ultimately in the best interest of our employer."

Jazz is the second largest airline in Canada based on fleet size and the only airline serving all 10 provinces and two territories. Jazz pilots fly 800-plus daily flights to 85 scheduled destinations in Canada and the United States. The company also has an operation dedicated to charters using both Dash 8s and CRJs. 🌐