

One year after choosing ALPA as their representative, the pilots of North American Airlines are proof that ALPA's approach to representing pilots—local autonomy supported by their

North American

North American Pilots: Fully Participating In Their Union

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**North American Airlines
F/O Pete Zepp.**

NAA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2009
Number of Pilots: 190
Pilot Base: New York (JFK)
Headquarters: Jamaica, N.Y.
Operations: North American Airlines provides air transportation services throughout the world, operating both charter and scheduled service for the U.S. military, tour operators, government agencies, and sports teams, among others, and as an ACMI carrier for other scheduled airlines
Fleet: 5 B-757-200s, 5 B-767-300ERs

union—works. Soon after becoming one of the Association's newest pilot groups, they began building a strong infrastructure that uses ALPA resources and staff experience and expertise to the fullest.

First, the Membership Committee, chaired by Capt. Al Campos, launched an aggressive membership drive that resulted in 99 percent of the pilots joining ALPA. The MEC also established a robust committee structure that focused on grievance, scheduling, communications, safety, and professional standards.

Capt. Al Gallo, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman, says, "Our MEC and all of our committees are unanimous in our commitment to defend our pilots with absolute loyalty to them. We have no other agenda." With Capt. Andy Danziger, the pilots' secretary-treasurer, overseeing a real operating budget to fund pilot activities (something they didn't have previously), committee members received the necessary training that ALPA provides to pilot volunteers.

The committees also made full use of ALPA's programs and services. For example, the pilots' top priorities are enforcing their contract, educating the pilots about their rights under the contract, and streamlining the grievance process. To that end, the Grievance Committee, chaired

by Capt. Bill Bushy, implemented online grievance filing via the MEC website to make it easier for pilots to report contract violations.

Scheduling Committee members also accomplished several important improvements. They enhanced transparency and succeeded in gaining access to the company tracking system for Capt. Pete Risko, the Committee chairman, and Gallo, allowing pilot representatives to work with management to ensure compliance with the scheduling section of the contract.

Capt. Bob Cooley, the Communications Committee chairman, and Committee members attended an ALPA orientation in which they developed and immediately implemented a plan to regularly communicate with members about union activities. The Jumpseat Committee, chaired by Capt. Nick Cercone, succeeded in opening up the airline's Air Mobility Command flights involving airline airports to pilots from other airlines. The Professional Standards Committee, led by Capt. Pete Pugsley, saw favorable outcomes to the cases it handled throughout the year.

Through the union, the Central Air Safety Committee (CASC) was able to strengthen line pilot involvement with various company departments. Capt. Dan Smith, the CASC chairman, takes the pilots' views and concerns to bimonthly companywide safety meetings. As worldwide events occurring in many places where the pilots fly caused security concerns, the Security Committee was activated with Capt. Dave Mares as chairman, leading to enhanced communications and coordination between

the pilots and the Flight Operations Department.

The Accident Investigation Committee was also established with Capt. Frank Rojas as chairman, enabling pilots to be included in any potential incident/accident investigations and providing a Go Team to assist. The ASAP Committee, chaired by Capt. Bill Emmanuel, worked with management and FAA representatives to determine common safety issues, offer strong recommendations to improve trouble areas, and uphold the airline's high level of safety. In fact, the FAA recognized the effectiveness of the airline's program by ranking it among the best in the airline industry.

Recognizing the value of peer interaction, the North American pilot leaders have also taken advantage of the many opportunities to work with other ALPA pilot groups. They started an open dialogue with their ALPA colleagues at Air Transport International, Evergreen, and Ryan who share similar issues and have the same types of customers.

While the pilots have benefited from these accomplishments, they have also given back to the Association. They have supported other ALPA pilot groups in their strategic planning committee activities, participated in numerous union activities such as the Air Safety Forum, and worked to advance the Association's strategic plan and to promote national committee initiatives, such as the Education Committee's ALPA ACE Club, in which F/O Stan Adams, the pilots' MEC vice chairman, is involved. As the pilots enter their second year of ALPA membership, they continue to demonstrate the adage, "You get out of your union what you put into it." 