

PSA

Management Hears Pilots' Message

By David Fisher, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



With perseverance, patience, and a continued focus on unity, the PSA crewmembers may soon need to break out their sunglasses and window shades. Bright skies may be just ahead.

When airline pilots observe dark clouds on the horizon, they know it often means a bumpy ride lies ahead. For the pilots of PSA, the turbulent conditions are not always in the sky; sometimes the bumpy conditions are caused by a management that lost focus and cut expenses in the wrong places. Continued pressure to reduce costs led PSA management to improperly staff the airline, attempt to unfairly leverage the collective bargaining agreement in its favor, and generally reduce the quality of life for PSA crewmembers.

"PSA crewmembers have declared that it's time for a positive change in the management-pilot relationship," says Capt. Mark Stanley, the pilots' Master Executive Council chairman. During the past year, the PSA crewmembers have sent a crystal-clear message to

management that the pilots will no longer tolerate one-sided, management-imposed policies. Furthermore, they have firmly expressed that negotiated agreements are critical to realizing the full support and potential of their pilots if they desire to maintain a competitive edge.

The PSA MEC voiced its expectations for an improved relationship during the course of Section 6 negotiations, which began in June 2009. Much progress has been achieved during the past 6 months, and the PSA Negotiating Committee is optimistic that negotiations will continue to be productive.

Unity means more to PSA pilots than just achieving their negotiating agenda; it also calls for staying engaged with the pilots at their sister company, Piedmont. PSA pilots are determined to resist management's tactics of pitting the two groups against each other. They continue to coordinate and provide support to the Piedmont pilots, who are also in negotiations, as Section 6 bargaining continues at both carriers.

"As ALPA pilots, we will not compete

against each other on wages and work rules. We won't let management leverage us against each other and will continue to work toward a stable contractual environment where inter-airline competition is based on operational performance and managerial competency and not on disparate pay rates and work rules," says Stanley.

The commitment of the PSA MEC to coordinate with other pilot groups has garnered support from other pilots as well. From the very beginning of their preparations for Section 6 negotiations, the pilots of Air Wisconsin have provided invaluable advice and support.

Contract negotiations may consume a large portion of the time and energy expended by the PSA MEC, but it also pursues the day-to-day core work of the Association to maintain and improve the safety of its pilots. The MEC continues to work with management on a program to reduce pilot fatigue, rather than simply reducing the number of pilots by removing themselves from flight duty as a result of fatigue. Stanley is proud to have a dedicated cadre of capable volunteers to do this hard and unsung work.

"Our committee structure is quite robust and constantly in action on the issues of contract compliance, safety, training, scheduling, and paving the way for future growth and success in our industry. It's what we do. Without the quality, support, and dedication of our volunteers, we'd have a much harder time taking care of our pilot group," Stanley says.

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PSA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1988 (PSA was previously called Jetstream. The airline changed its name to PSA in 1996.)

Number of Pilots: 400+ (55 on furlough)

Headquarters: Dayton, Ohio

Pilot Bases: Dayton, Ohio; Charlotte, N.C.; Knoxville, Tenn.

Airports Currently Served: 65 within the US Airways route network

Fleet: 35 CRJ200s, 14 CRJ700s