

Moak Creates Committee For Remote Ops

In June, Capt. Lee Moak, ALPA's president, created a President's Committee for Remote Operations (PCRO) to address the challenges that ALPA members face on a daily basis during flight operations in remote areas such as the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Alaskan locations at the outer fringes of the North American continent. Launching the PCRO was, Moak noted, "an effort to further support ALPA's One Level of Safety and Security concept." With appropriate support and input from ALPA's Engineering and Air Safety Department and Air Safety Organization, the PCRO will evaluate what needs to be addressed and develop the strategy for doing it.

"Using our union's collective strength will allow ALPA to lead the effort to improve operating conditions in remote areas such as the high north, Arctic, and other remote areas," Moak explained. "No other organization is better equipped or has

If you have a problem while operating in a remote location, please contact your local executive council or master executive council safety representative. If the problem is serious or time-critical, call ALPA's Engineering and Air Safety Department at 1-800-424-2470.

more expertise to meet the challenge of improving the unique safety and security operational concerns our pilots face in these regions of the world.

"These aviators are true professionals in everything they do," he continued.

"They operate in a harsh, unpredictable environment using rough, unpaved runways, making approaches with basic nonprecision nav aids. Frequently, NDBs and offset or circling VOR approaches are the only means of accessing these runways. Because of such conditions, these aviators often operate aircraft to their limits. The locations in these challenging areas of both Canada and the United States are often marginally equipped to adequately deal with the realities of airline service in all-weather operations.

"While our pilots do a superb job of managing the risks associated with these procedures, the risks nevertheless should be mitigated by 21st-century instrument procedures. I look forward to reviewing the important safety work this committee will produce in our constant advocacy efforts to strive for and maintain One Level of Safety and Security for all ALPA members."

Off to a flying start

Capt. Peter Black (First Air), who chairs the new committee, added, "I'm privileged to work with several members representing our pilots at several airlines with direct interests in these areas, and we will coordinate with others as appropriate to ensure that we understand the scope of issues and how they affect our members. The initial cadre we have selected for the PCRO includes Capt. Tanice Steiner (Calm Air), Capt. Rob Cochrane (Canadian North), Capt. Craig Huffman (Alaska), and Capt. Mark Vink (First Air)."

Black pointed out, "Per [Capt. Moak's] direction, the committee was formed to focus ALPA's efforts in addressing the unique challenges of operating in the remote north and Arctic regions of Canada and the United States. These areas are primarily above 60 degrees north latitude but also include some extremely remote locations further south.

"The navigation and communication challenges are particularly acute," he continued. "Canada has begun decommissioning older nav aids such as NDBs and has been slow to implement RNAV as a replacement and significant improvement. These issues also affect our members who don't directly operate there, but who must have safe, viable alternate landing airports in the region for long-haul ETOPS/LROPS routes.

"Operationally, we confront situations in these remote regions that most of our members will never see—gravel or ice runways, airfields with nothing but an NDB for access, austere infrastructure, and rapidly changing weather with limited forecasting capability."

Even the "midnight sun" can be a hazard: The long day and night can play havoc with a pilot's ability to sleep. Scheduling rules and practices, say some who've flown and ROned in the circumpolar regions, should take that into account.—*Jan W. Steenblik, Technical Editor*

