



# THE PILOTS OF ALPA 2012

You have one engine, two, three, or four; a panel of colorful glass, or steam gauges; other pilots in your crew, or none; 400 beach-bound tourists, or fuel for a gravel strip lit by shimmering northern lights. You stand in the wheel wells at oh-dark-hundred in air so cold it freezes Jet A, or in blistering heat that soaks your shirt.  You push on schedule but join a mile-long conga line. You slow for spacing or race the rabbit and pull the handles back at the fence.  In 2011, you moved millions of passengers and mountains of freight. You flew to all 50 states, all 10 provinces, all three Canadian territories, and six continents. You crossed every ocean, the Arctic wastes, trackless jungles, and scorching deserts.  You are the pilots and flight engineers who make “Schedule with Safety” happen. *You* are ALPA.  Turn the page to learn more about your ALPA brothers and sisters.



After nearly two decades of battling to build market share and win passengers with their award-winning customer service, the pilots of AirTran Airways fast approach a final

# AirTran

## “Citrus” Move Bittersweet As Pilots Transition to Southwest

By Toni C. Vacinek  
ALPA Communications Specialist

climb. Founded in 1992, the team members of AirTran Airways worked hard to build an airline that they could be proud of and call their own. Recognizing that warrior spirit and capitalizing on the opportunity to gain market share in Atlanta, Ga., Southwest Airlines announced its intent to buy AirTran on Sept. 27, 2010. Soon thereafter, on November 19, the AirTran pilots signed a contract with management, ending a long bout of contract negotia-

hard and dedicate their time and efforts to advancing the pilots’ future. A new website and an e-mail address were created to act as central locations for all merger-related information, questions, and feedback. These tools proved to be effective in informing members about the process, verifying seniority, providing documents for review, and maintaining transparency to keep all members abreast of the progress.

The date of corporate closing (DOCC), May 2, 2011, brought about a number of changes. Immediately following the DOCC, the two respective union Merger Committees entered into seniority integration negotiations. Since this was not an ALPA-to-ALPA pilot group merger, the process was not governed by ALPA’s merger policy and proved to be challenging. Doing what Southwest Airlines perceived to be best for its own well-being, the airline became heavily involved in the negotiations process, eventually presenting proposals to both Merger Committees. After a failed first attempt, the two pilot groups voted for and approved a second proposed agreement on Nov. 7, 2011.

The AirTran acquisition gives Southwest the ability to build a stronger airline that will grow not only domestically but internationally. Alone, neither airline had the growth potential that Southwest now possesses. While AirTran pilots will enjoy working for a company that has a strong balance sheet and takes care of its employees, the Southwest pilots will welcome the growth opportunity that the purchase of AirTran provides them, including domestic gates at LaGuardia

in New York, Reagan National in Washington, D.C., and Hartsfield-Jackson—the world’s busiest airport—in Atlanta, Ga., as well as international flying.

The transition from AirTran to Southwest has begun. The training bids are under way, and AirTran pilots are embarking on the next chapter of their careers. “Change in representation is inevitable,” says F/O Linden Hillman, the AirTran pilots’ MEC chairman. “Although the day that AirTran pilots are no longer part of ALPA will be a somber one, they remain optimistic about their future with Southwest Airlines.”

Looking ahead, Southwest has announced the largest aircraft order in Boeing’s history. The airline will be the launch customer for the new B-737 Max, which is touted to be 10 percent more fuel efficient than current models. Southwest anticipates that the FAA will award a single operating certificate early this year. From there, the transition will continue, the moving parts will fall into place, and the pilots of AirTran Airways will help Southwest Airlines succeed into the future.



PHOTO BY ANDY BRAND (AIRTRAN)

Morning preflight at Boston Logan International Airport.

tions. Moving into 2011, with contract negotiations behind them, the pilots were now able to focus on the future.

The Master Executive Council (MEC) leaders quickly restructured the MEC Merger Committee, electing a group of pilots that they felt confident would work

### ATN at a Glance

- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 2009
- **Number of pilots:** 1,700+
- **Pilot domiciles:** Atlanta, Ga.; Milwaukee, Wisc.; Orlando, Fla.
- **Headquarters:** Orlando, Fla.
- **Operations/services:** Founded in 1992, AirTran Airways is one of America’s largest low-cost airlines offering jet service coast to coast with more than 700 daily flights to 46 domestic and 10 near international (Caribbean and Mexico) destinations. It is also the second-largest airline at the world’s busiest airport, Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International, and has major operations in Baltimore, Md.; Milwaukee, Wisc.; Orlando, Fla. AirTran Airways is a wholly owned subsidiary of Southwest Airlines.
- **Fleet:** 88 B-717s, 52 B-737s

**A**ir Transat pilots are known for their skill at handling a bumpy ride. From contract implementation showstoppers to unexpected layoffs exacerbated by Canada's

employees. Then on Nov. 19, 2011, Air Transat sent layoff notices to 17 pilots, citing its recent financial results and a decrease in flight hours as justification for the layoffs. The airline has not yet ruled out the possibility of more layoffs. True to form, Air Transat pilots instantly pulled together to find alternatives that would minimize the effect of the layoffs, set to occur just before the holiday season, including voluntary leaves of absence and reduced block hours. "These layoffs are a major blow," Aubin says.

The pilot layoffs stem from the Temporary Foreign Worker Program, a legislative loophole that has allowed companies in Canada to forgo hiring Canadian pilots in lieu of hiring less costly, less experienced foreign pilots at the cost of displacing Canadian pilots. The guidelines for the Program stipulate that eligible foreign workers may be employed if the employer can demonstrate it's unable to find suitable Canadian/permanent residents to fill the position.

Despite there being unemployed pilots in Canada, the federal government has authorized select airlines to hire foreign pilots under the Temporary Foreign Worker Program. Of particular concern is the trend among some Canadian airlines to augment their crews on a seasonal basis with foreign pilots. During the winter months, Air Transat mainly flies to global vacation destinations, including the Caribbean. "The fact that Transat A.T. is using foreign pilots when its own pilots are out of work is reprehensible," notes Aubin. "It's time to put an end to these practices."

Air Transat pilots have

been down this road before, most recently in 2010, and have diplomatically faced the foreign worker issue head-on. The MEC recognizes the value of such a program and that it may have been conceived with good intentions. As more and more Canadian pilots become displaced, however, the unintended by-product is causing repercussions throughout Canada as the threat of highly trained unemployed Canadian pilots looms overhead. Aubin and others familiar with the Temporary Foreign Worker issues believe that the Program is being used to create economic advantage, as airlines that hire seasonally can also eliminate training costs.

Capt. Dan Adamus (Jazz), ALPA's Canada Board president, appeared before the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications on November 30. He spoke about the emerging implications the trend is forcing on Canadian airlines to augment their crew on a seasonal basis with foreign pilots. As the leading advocate for Canadian airline pilots, the Canada Board is initiating a legislative campaign aimed at mitigating the negative effect the current outsourcing is having on Air Transat pilots and other Canadian pilots.

Despite these obstacles, the pilots remain a unified group, ready to face the challenges that come their way in 2012 and beyond. 

# Air Transat

## Pilots Stand Their Ground Against Lagging Contract Execution and Layoffs

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

Temporary Foreign Worker Program, the pilots weathered heavy chop as they navigated through 2011, a year fraught with challenges. Yet, these challenges have only made the pilot group stronger and more determined to stand together.

Capt. Sylvain Aubin, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman, says the company has been more than a little reluctant to implement changes to the contract the pilots ratified more than a



**Air Transat F/O Vincent Van Winden.**

year ago. "Our pilots stand firm on implementing every detail of the collective agreement we worked hard to ratify," Aubin says. "The MEC has worked diligently, emboldened by our resources within the ALPA family, to resolve more disputes than we've ever experienced before."

The pilot group hit another rough patch after parent company Transat A.T.'s lackluster fourth-quarter earnings forced the airline to restructure, resulting in more than 140 layoffs of nonunionized

**TSC at a Glance**

- Pilots joined ALPA: 1999
- Number of pilots: 432
- Headquarters: Pierre E. Trudeau International Airport, Montreal, P.Q.
- Pilot bases: Montreal, P.Q.; Toronto, Ont.; and Vancouver, B.C.
- Fleet: 11 A310s, 12 A330s



Two years after joining ALPA and seven years after they opened contract negotiations, the crewmembers of Air Transport International ratified a new collective bargain-

# Air Transport International

## With Contract Improvements Secured, Crewmembers Prepare for The Future

By Barbara Gottshalk  
ALPA Lead Communications Specialist



From left, Mike Sterling, vice president of Operations; Capt. Tom Rogers, MEC chairman; Capt. Bill Couette, ALPA vice president – administration/secretary; Flight Engineer Carl Jones, MEC secretary-treasurer; and Cindi McConnell, the airline’s president, sign the new flightcrew member collective bargaining agreement on Nov. 28, 2011.

ing agreement in November 2011. The 30-month contract includes home basing for all aircraft and flight crews, scheduling and compensation improvements, new job protections, and a 5 percent wage increase and \$1 million performance bonus.

The path to securing these improvements was not always a smooth one. Over the course of negotiations, members voted down several tentative agreements (TAs), including one last spring. Meanwhile, changes to the airline’s business model resulted in shutting down the Toledo, Ohio, base. More recently, management announced a reduction in the number of DC-8s and furloughs.

After the TA failed in March, the Master Executive Council (MEC) leaders took immediate steps to develop a new course for achieving a contract that would meet the members’ needs. They surveyed them to determine the main objections to the previous TA. Armed with that information, the MEC then formulated a strategic plan to make the necessary changes and reengage management in negotiations.

“Looking at the state of our company, especially the future of the DC-8s, it became obvious to us that the time

line for getting a new TA was short,” Capt. Tom Rogers, chairman of the group’s MEC, says. “Our main goal was to secure the quality-of-life improvements and job protections that our members told us were ‘must-haves’ in this contract,” Rogers adds.

At the bargaining table, the Negotiating Committee stayed focused on these strategic priorities. “We were able to fix most of the objectionable sections of the TA,” says Capt. Cameron Coyle, the MEC vice chairman. “At the same time, we successfully negotiated a process whereby we are able to work with management—through ALPA—to capitalize on future business opportunities.”

Once the Negotiating Committee reached a TA with management in October, the MEC leaders launched an extensive education campaign. Without a major hub, conducting road shows became difficult, so they produced a “virtual road show” that crewmembers could access online.

Throughout the process, the MEC worked closely with ALPA staff. “From our contract administrator who was there with us every step of the way to Economic & Financial Analysis’s superb financial analysis to Legal’s work rewriting the scope language and Communications’ help in getting the information to the crewmembers, the willingness of the entire support team to do whatever needed to be done, at a moment’s notice in many cases, was invaluable,” says Flight Engineer Carl Jones, the MEC secretary-treasurer.

As they move forward with implementation, there will be adjustments for both the crewmembers and

management. For example, the crewmembers have been operating under the previous contract’s scheduling section for the past 11 years. Other positive changes that may take some getting used to include improvements in benefits in the R&I section and several new pay opportunities outside of normal line operations such as volunteering and junior manning.

In addition to implementing the new contract, the crewmembers are starting off the year with a new MEC (which takes office in March) and a new set of challenges and opportunities. These include phasing out DC-8s, transitioning to B-767s as the main fleet aircraft, and training and integrating the group into the new business model.

Vigorously enforcing the contract is a key aspect of the MEC’s strategic plan. “The new contract includes better constructed work rules and more specific contract language in many areas that will help in handling grievances,” Rogers says.

The incoming MEC leaders will also be able to devote even more attention to building their committee structure. With these additional opportunities to become active in their union and take advantage of the resources and training that ALPA has to offer, the crewmembers are well positioned for the future.

### ATI at a Glance

- Crewmembers joined ALPA: November 2009
- Number of crewmembers: 260
- Operations: Combi passenger, military, and cargo operations around the world
- Base: Home-based
- Corporate headquarters: Little Rock, Ark.
- Fleet: Currently operates DC-8 combis and freighters and B-767s



**N**egotiations took center stage in 2011 as the Air Wisconsin pilots worked to negotiate much-needed contract improvements. In 2003, the pilots ratified a con-

cessionary agreement in an attempt to retain the code-share agreement with United Airlines. The company lost the United flying, invested in US Airways during its bankruptcy, and began flying as US Airways Express in 2005. Negotiations for a new agreement began in October 2010, and the pilots are demanding a return on their investment.

“The loan is past due, and we are determined to collect on the investment we made to ensure the viability of Air Wisconsin,” says Capt. Richard Swindell, chairman of the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC). “Our bargaining goals are simple: pay increases, work rule enhancements, and significant quality-of-life improvements for our pilots.”

The pilots’ contract became amendable in October 2011, approximately one year after discussions began. In preparing for negotiations, the pilots established a two-year game plan to accomplish their bargaining goals. They are now a little more than halfway through the process and have made substantial progress: 17 of the 30 contract sections have either been opened or tentatively agreed upon. Of these, they have reached tentative agreements (TA) with management on 9 sections and have 5 sections with only a few remaining items. Highlights of improvements made to date include

limits on management flying, implementation of a Training Review Board, and an improved recall process for furloughed pilots. Most importantly, the pilots have successfully defended against management’s concessionary requests and have continued to make contract improvements.

During the first quarter of 2012, negotiations will focus on enhancing pilot work rules in the Scheduling and Hours of Service sections. In Scheduling, the pilots will propose solutions based upon current regulations and will modify those as necessary to comply with any new flight-time/duty-time limits that may apply—including reducing time away from base, reducing maximum credit in a bid, improving the reserve system, and more. The focus for the Hours of Service section is twofold—to provide pilots with a better quality of life and to improve safety by implementing more realistic duty-time limits.

The pilots hope to move on to the pure economic sections—pay, benefits, and other areas—by the second quarter and are optimistic that a tentative agreement can be presented to the pilot group for ratification by the end of the year.

Assisting Air Wisconsin pilots in their collective bargaining efforts are ALPA pilots from Mesa, Piedmont, Pinnacle, PSA, and Trans States. As members of ALPA’s US Airways Express Pilots Alliance (USEPA), pilot leaders from Air Wisconsin and the other five ALPA pilot groups have been working together during the past year to promote the careers of US Airways Express pilots, develop favorable bargaining patterns,

and harmonize their collective bargaining agreements. This level of coordination is especially important given the volatility of the regional airline industry and competition among the carriers for flying.

“The regional industry is capricious in nature,” Swindell says. “While we are focused on issues close to home such as improving our collective bargaining agreement, we are also keeping a watchful eye on the industry to ensure that Air Wisconsin remains competitive in the marketplace.”

Additional USEPA initiatives include promoting job security and streamlining safety programs within the US Airways Express brand. Should flying shift from one USEPA carrier to another, pilot leaders are committed to working together to address the issue. In the event that another carrier begins to furlough, Air Wisconsin pilots will work with management to set up preferential hiring of affected ALPA pilots.

Notable safety advancements at Air Wisconsin over the past year include the implementation of a FOQA program with ALPA as a full participant, an AQP, and a new ASAP that improves the review process and enriches the overall program.

## Air Wisconsin

### Pilots Focus On Contract Improvements, Bolstering Safety Programs

By Lydia Jakub, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**Capt. Corey Stutsman, left, and F/O Ben Grant, who are wearing pink ties in observance of Breast Cancer Awareness Month.**

#### ARW at a Glance

- **Pilots Joined ALPA:** 1982 as a result of the Union of Professional Airmen merger with ALPA
- **Number of pilots:** 665
- **Operations:** Nearly 500 daily departures to 26 states and 3 Canadian provinces; with service to 70 cities throughout North America, the airline carries nearly 6 million passengers per year
- **Headquarters:** Appleton, Wisc.
- **Domiciles:** New York (LGA); Norfolk, Va. (ORF); Philadelphia, Pa. (PHL); Raleigh-Durham, N.C. (RDU); Washington, D.C. (DCA)
- **Fleet:** 71 Canadair 50-seat regional jets (CRJ200s)



Alaska Airlines' pilots are moving forward with seven clearly defined goals, developed in mid-2011 when the Master Executive Council (MEC) finalized its strategic plan. Those

# Alaska

## Pilots Look To Advance Their Goals

By Jenn Sutton, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



Alaska F/O Steven Brodersen is screened at a Known Crewmember checkpoint at SeaTac International Airport.

goals include engaging the members, improving contractual cornerstones, contract education and compliance, leadership in the culture of safety, relationships with ethics and integrity, preparing for the future, and strategic management. And above all, the MEC is committed to ensuring that the safety of flight is not compromised while pursuing its goals.

At its MEC meeting last November, the pilot leaders benchmarked progress against the strategic plan and talked about tactics and strategies for advancing their goals in 2012. As they ring in the New Year, the MEC leaders will emphasize contract education and enforcement, rebuilding the Pilot-to-Pilot and Family Awareness communications programs, and supporting committee volunteers and spotlighting the work they do.

"Without our volunteers, we can't expect to reach our other goals. Our volunteers and committees are the lifeblood of our organization," says Capt. Chris Notaro, the MEC secretary-treasurer. "That means doing our best to ensure that our volunteers have the tools and resources they need to continue doing their work protecting, defending, and enhancing safety, our careers, and our profession."

As a part of its commitment to improving contractual

cornerstones, the MEC is working to improve the contract outside of the traditional Section 6 negotiating process. In part, this means negotiating letters of agreement and memorandums of understanding between contracts to improve portions of the collective bargaining agreement. The MEC and Negotiating Committee also are exploring ways in which to keep the upcoming negotiations from extending beyond the April 1, 2013, amendable date.

"When you have a long status-quo period, things stay exactly the same as they were on the day before the amendable date—sometimes for years. Both sides can expend a lot of time, energy, and money fighting one another," says F/O Paul Stuart, the MEC chairman. "We believe that there has to be another way, and we are committed to finding ways that will enable us to fix the things that aren't working and to make improvements not just when a new contract is ratified after years of intense negotiations, but as opportunities emerge."

The processes and relationship that the MEC has developed with Alaska's management, in which the parties meet periodically to discuss issues such as scheduling and grievances, will be vital as the MEC advances its strategic plan.

"We cannot expect to accomplish our goal of improving the lives of our pilots outside of the contentious and typically lengthy Section 6 process unless both parties are ready and willing to work together to solve our problems for the benefit of everyone," Capt. Craig Huffman, the MEC vice chairman, says.

For the first time since 2009, Alaska's pilots will start

the year prepared to face the tasks and challenges that lie ahead without any involuntarily furloughed pilots. The last of Alaska's furloughed pilots returned on Nov. 29, 2011, after nearly three years. Less than two weeks later, the first class of new hires since January 2008 began training. Alaska expects to continue hiring pilots throughout 2012 and beyond.

"Throughout the furlough, this pilot group came together to support the pilots who were furloughed. We negotiated programs to mitigate furloughs, the pilot group passed an assessment to pay our furloughed pilots' healthcare premiums, and individual pilots stepped up to create a Christmas fund each year to make the holidays brighter," Stuart notes. "As difficult as it was to see 106 of our pilots furloughed and face the challenges they endured, the way in which our pilot group responded made me proud to be an Alaska pilot."

Says Stuart, "Overall, this is a good time to be a pilot at Alaska Airlines. Our airline is growing, it is financially healthy, and there is every reason to expect that success to continue. But that doesn't mean everything is perfect. History, however, has demonstrated that this pilot group has the fortitude to face any challenges that arise and to emerge strong on the other side."

### ALA at a Glance

- **Number of pilots:** 1,426
- **Operations:** 422 daily departures to 61 destinations in the U.S., Mexico, and Canada
- **Domiciles:** Anchorage, Alaska; Los Angeles, Calif.; Portland, Ore.; Seattle, Wash.
- **Fleet:** 24 B-737-400s, 17 B-737-700s, 58 B-737-800s, 12 B-737-900s, 5 B-737-400Cs, 1 B-737-400 freighter



A year that started out full of promise ended full of turbulence for the American Eagle pilots. The year 2011 began with an increase in

AA seniority numbers await their turn. In addition to the movement created by the arbitration award, American Eagle took delivery of 22 CRJ-700s that required additional staffing.

The MEC also continued to focus on the viability of Eagle as it prepared for a potential divestiture from AMR. AMR had been vocal during the past few years that an independent Eagle was a priority to the overall financial health of the Corporation. AMR took significant steps toward this end by filing the necessary divestiture documents with the SEC.

In anticipation of the divestiture, the MEC directed the Negotiating Committee to focus on crafting a deal that would allow Eagle to succeed as a stand-alone entity. Negotiators spent a good portion of the year working toward a tentative agreement with Eagle management that addressed profitability and cost issues going forward as an independent airline as well as providing growth opportunities under a better Air Services Agreement with AA.

The MEC jointly developed and wrote a bullet-point TA with management that was being written into contract language when AMR declared bankruptcy. Unfortunately, when the bankruptcy filing occurred, AA took the position that it would not proceed with the TA.

Late in November, AMR cited rising costs and a desire to become more competitive as reasons for filing Chapter 11. "This takes our MEC and our pilot group in a whole new direction in terms of hiring trends, upgrades, and negotiations," Gutierrez says.

On the day of the filing, the labor unions representing pilots, flight attendants, and mechanics were all given letters by AMR and Eagle stating their intent to make proposals for modified labor contracts under a subsection of the bankruptcy code that allows companies in bankruptcy to seek bankruptcy court authority to reject labor contracts.

ALPA immediately enlisted its longstanding outside law firm, Cohen, Weiss and Simon LLP, as bankruptcy attorneys to represent the Eagle pilots. In early December, the MEC met, and with the full support of Capt. Lee Moak, ALPA's president, the MEC members decided to take a proactive stance to resolving the situation.

"The MEC plans to discuss with management what our company will look like and how our contract will be affected," says Gutierrez. "The MEC will do whatever is necessary to preserve the livelihood of all Eagle pilots. Fortunately, we have the support, experience, and unity of our ALPA brothers and sisters to help us through this difficult time." ☺

### EGL at a Glance

■ **Pilots joined ALPA:** 1995 (after the National Mediation Board's 1995 ruling that the four airlines serving American Airlines—Executive, Flagship, Simmons, and Wings West—constituted a single airline, the Eagle pilots established a single MEC)

■ **Number of pilots:** 3,200

■ **Pilot domiciles:** Chicago, Ill.; Dallas/Ft. Worth, Tex.; Los Angeles, Calif.; Miami, Fla.; JFK and LGA, N.Y.; and San Juan, P.R.

■ **Operations:** More than 1,700 daily flights to more than 150 cities throughout the United States, Canada, the Bahamas, the Caribbean, and Mexico

■ **Headquarters:** Ft. Worth, Tex.

■ **Fleet:** CRJ700s, EMB-135s, EMB-140s, EMB-145s, ATR 72s

## American Eagle

### Pilots Face New Challenges Moving into 2012

By Kimberly Seitz, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist, and F/O Jared Dirkmaat, American Eagle Communications Committee Chairman

Eagle pilots flowing through to American Airlines (AA), continued with the arrival of new aircraft, and hit a crescendo with the potential opportunities provided by a tentative agreement (TA). American Eagle had cultivated an ideal environment for continued growth after a possible divestiture from AMR Corporation, AA's parent company. However, the unexpected AMR bankruptcy filing in November 2011 had the Eagle Master Executive Council (MEC) swiftly switching gears to accommodate a new reality.

Eagle pilots began flowing to AA in 2010 after an arbitrator ruled on a flow-through agreement that was negotiated in 1997. "In anticipation of a changing environment, American Eagle hired approximately 600 pilots to accommodate movement and upgrades in every fleet and every domicile," says Capt. Tony Gutierrez, the pilots' MEC chairman. "Eagle increased its hiring to replace those senior pilots who chose to go to American and fill the vacancies created by junior pilots upgrading." Approximately 180 Eagle pilots, who already possessed seniority numbers at AA, flowed to AA, while approximately 240 more with



American Eagle F/O Andi Lusha.



Just three years ago, many industry observers had shut and locked the door on ASTAR airlines. Today, although the airline is still struggling and the number of pilots has

## ASTAR Air Cargo

### Working Together to Succeed

By Jen Lofquist, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

diminished, the pilots are pulling together to save their airline, their jobs, and their careers.

"After that difficult year in 2008, and seeing so many of our friends and colleagues furloughed, the pilots had to really consider where we were going," says Capt. George Chetcuti, the pilot group's Master Executive Council



**Capt. Matthew Rubin takes his last flight as an ASTAR pilot with F/O Brent Covey.**

(MEC) chairman. "The choice before us was very simple: We all pull together—both pilots and management—to save our company or watch the last of our flying disappear."

The pilots decided that it was the time to put aside the notion of management versus pilots and start seeing everyone as a part of ASTAR. The MEC took the approach of finding solutions to problems. Working closely with company executives and ALPA staff, the pilots have sought new revenue streams, suggested new ideas, and are

looking toward a new future.

"We aren't just sitting across the table with management as we have done in the past when negotiating a contract," continues Chetcuti. "We are sitting on the same side—management, pilots, and ALPA. We've been able to use the full range of ALPA resources to help craft new solutions—from legal perspective to economic analysis. It's a collaborative effort to think outside the box so that we can continue to come to work at ASTAR. For many of us, this is the only operation we've flown for, and we're determined to keep the airline in business. And working with management as a partner is the only way we can do this."

The road ahead will be rough and long. In 2009, ASTAR boasted an extensive fleet of aircraft, including 6 A300b4 freighters, 29 B-727-200Fs, 8 DC-8-73Fs, and 1 Bell 206 L-1. Today, only the DC-8s remain on the property. These workhorses of the cargo industry carry a maximum of 109,000 pounds of cargo. Although originally designed to be passenger airliners, by 2000 ASTAR was mainly using the DC-8s for cargo with very few exceptions.

Just as the fleet has shrunk, so, too, has the pilot group. When the group signed its landmark contract in 2008, the airline had more than 500 pilots. Today, just 84 remain—28 captains, 28 first officers, and 28 second officers. "Although there are fewer of us than ever before in our history, we are committed to keeping this airline going, and hopefully building it back to what it was just a few short years ago," says Chetcuti. "We are fortunate that ASTAR is a privately held company, so we are immune

to any shareholder demands for immediate profit. Instead, our management and our owners have shown the same level of commitment to this airline that every pilot on the property has demonstrated time and time again."

Operating out of their main base in Cincinnati, Ohio, the pilots fly mainly for DHL, a Germany-based international shipping company, and another important client—the U.S. Air Force. Under contract to the U.S. Department of Defense, ASTAR pilots fly to military bases and carry cargo to help the military efforts.

The relationship with DHL goes far back to the very inception of ASTAR. Originally, the airline was called DHL Airways. Deutsche Post bought DHL in 2002 and absorbed it into the company. Federal regulations prohibiting foreign ownership of any U.S. airline forced Deutsche Post to sell the airline in 2003 to a private investment company, headed by ASTAR's current CEO, John Dasburg. In 2007, DHL—ASTAR's main client—bought 49 percent of the company, only to again divest its holdings in 2010, selling back its stock to ASTAR and its investment team.

As the pilots navigate through 2012, they know it will not be easy. They will continue to have an uphill battle to save the airline. However, now that the pilots are working alongside management and investors to create a new future for ASTAR, the horizon is looking a bit brighter.

#### DHL at a Glance

- Pilots joined ALPA: 1991
- Number of pilots: 84
- Headquarters: Miami, Fla.
- Pilot base: Cincinnati, Ohio
- Fleet: 8 DC-8-73Fs



Less than 16 months after SkyWest Holdings, Inc., the parent company of Atlantic Southeast Airlines, announced approval of the purchase of ExpressJet by Atlantic South-

Despite this single identity, the two pilot groups have much to accomplish as they combine into one airline. Representatives from both Atlantic Southeast and ExpressJet pilot groups have been working toward a joint collective bargaining agreement since May 2011. Although progress has been made, about two thirds of the contract sections still need to be agreed upon.

between the groups that now face a combined future.

However, in September 2011, Atlantic Southeast pilots received dispiriting news. After months of growth, the recall of all the furloughs, bringing on ExpressJet furloughs, and hiring additional pilots, the company announced that 14 airplanes would be leaving the property.

On December 31, Atlantic Southeast operated six fewer CRJ200s, and by March 2012, the airline will have eight fewer CRJ700s. While the final fate of the -200s is still in doubt, the -700s will now be operated by GoJet flying for Delta Air Lines as the result of Atlantic Southeast losing a bid to keep the airplanes.

“We are ready to do everything in our power to mitigate any proposed furloughs,” Nieuwenhuis says. “The strength of our union is shown not in the easy times but in the difficult ones. And we will face this situation just as we have faced each one before—with a unified goal, a single vision, and a commitment to each and every Atlantic Southeast pilot. The Atlantic Southeast MEC will work closely with management and the ExpressJet MEC to ensure the future of our pilots.”

As the pilots move ever closer to being part of the largest regional airline in the world with destinations throughout the United States, they have focused not on what makes them different from their fellow pilots at ExpressJet but on their commonalities. And it’s this joint commitment that will ensure the success of Atlantic Southeast, no matter what name the airline flies under.

east, the merger crossed an important regulatory hurdle. On Nov. 18, 2011, with ExpressJet surrendering its certificate the previous day, the FAA approved a single operating certificate for the two airlines.

“Although the single operating certificate is a significant milestone in the process of ExpressJet and Atlantic Southeast becoming one airline,” comments Capt. David Nieuwenhuis, the pilot group’s Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman, “we are still progressing toward becoming one pilot group. Only with a final joint contract that shares success and completes our airline’s commitment to the joint pilots can we be one airline in every sense of the word.”

In October, one month before the FAA approved the single operating certificate, the combined airline was given a name: ExpressJet. After announcing a new name for the airline in July, the company pulled back from the proposed name of “SureJet” and instead put the new name to a vote by the employees. ExpressJet won the vote, with the final logo incorporating the Atlantic Southeast branding. The name took effect on December 31.

The joint Negotiating Committee continues to meet almost weekly with the company to try to hammer out a deal that will finally merge these two pilot groups into one. Beyond their work at the table, Negotiating Committee members have kept a focus on communication. Receiving an update every other week, line pilots know exactly which contract sections have been agreed upon, which are in discussion, and which have not been opened.

“With two diverse pilot groups and pilots located across the country, the Negotiating Committee knew that communications would be a priority,” says Nieuwenhuis. “Without communication and reliable information, rumor, gossip, and speculation take hold. These can destroy a collaborative environment in the best of circumstances. To be successful, we needed to work together not just at the table, but in every aspect of the merger.”

In the collaborative spirit, Atlantic Southeast and ExpressJet MECs have held many joint meetings, with the next one scheduled for January 2012. The two MECs discuss any issues that may hold up progress while also building strong bonds

# Atlantic Southeast

## Forging a Joint Path

By Jen Lofquist, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



An Atlantic Southeast CRJ at Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport is readied for flight.

### ASA at a Glance

- Pilots joined ALPA: 1987
- First ALPA contract: Nov. 28, 1989
- Number of pilots: 1,711
- Headquarters: Atlanta, Ga.
- Pilot bases: Dulles, Va.; Atlanta, Ga.; Detroit, Mich.
- Fleet: 106 CRJ200s, 38 CRJ700s, 10 CRJ900s



The year 2012 promises to be another busy one for the Bearskin pilots, who've just added a new route to their schedule and are also in the midst of negotiating their

# Bearskin

## Pilots Strive To Maintain Growth and A Mutually Beneficial Contract

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



One of Bearskin's Metroliners at Kapuskasing Airport.

fifth contract with their airline, a subsidiary of the Canadian corporation, Exchange Income Corporation (EIC).

The pilots are focusing on achieving advancements to the new contract that will land what Capt. Danny Parnham, the pilots' Master Executive Council chairman, calls a "career contract." Parnham and the Negotiating

Committee, Capts. Robert Marsh and Steve Mauro, who also serve as the MEC vice chair and secretary-treasurer, respectively, are encouraged by the progress they're making at the bargaining table, where the parties are currently using an interest-based-bargaining approach.

Through this process, the negotiators on both sides of the table candidly discuss what problems exist from a fact-based perspective and jointly solve these issues in a manner that works for everyone. This bargaining approach and a continued positive outlook are due in part to the mutually beneficial relationship that the pilots share with management. In seven years, the pilots have not filed one grievance. "We con-

tinue to reap the rewards of a mutually respectful labour-management relationship," says Parnham. "We will strive to reach a settlement that benefits not only the pilot group, but also our airline's business plan."

Parnham, Marsh, and Mauro know that the pilots and the airline fill a crucial role within the commuter airline segment. The company recently added Montreal, P.Q., to the route structure, flying three times a day from Montreal to Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont. Montreal has become the 18th city that Bearskin serves and is its second nonstop destination from the region of Waterloo International Airport, an area centrally located to Canada's Technology Triangle and the communities of Kitchener, Waterloo, and Cambridge. With close to 500,000 residents in these communities, the region represents the 10th largest economy in Canada and the fifth largest in Ontario.

"Bearskin has found its place in the commuter world, and we continue to do well in spite of the price wars brought about by low-cost carriers Porter Airlines and Sky Regional," says Parnham. With the addition of Montreal, Bearskin now offers more than 100 scheduled daily departures to 18 destinations in Manitoba, Ontario, and Quebec.

After purchasing Calm Air in 2009, EIC made a public offering to buy Bearskin Airlines for \$32.5 million. In January 2011, the investment group completed its acquisition of the airline. "I believe the sale of Bearskin to EIC was a positive move. EIC is a company that capitalizes on the potential for growth in its purchases," says Parnham.

"Even with the current economic challenges, I'm optimistic about the future of our airline. EIC has approved the purchase of two additional Metroliners, which would increase the fleet to 16 and require hiring more pilots."

Operating Fairchild Metroliners that are equipped with twin turbine engines and seat 19 passengers, Bearskin continues to serve select markets in Ontario that are considered to be underserved, including Sioux Lookout, Kenora, Dryden, Red Lake, and Fort Frances in northwestern Ontario and Timmins, Sudbury, Kapuskasing, North Bay, and Kitchener-Waterloo in eastern Ontario.

Bearskin's main pilot base is in Thunder Bay. The airline has two smaller pilot bases in Sioux Lookout and Winnipeg, Man., and is exploring the option of adding a pilot base in Kitchener-Waterloo. Thunder Bay and Sudbury combined feature more than 25 departures daily and act as Bearskin's major hubs, linking northern Ontario's five largest cities and a number of smaller communities to Winnipeg and Ottawa. The pilots fly routes as far south as Kitchener-Waterloo, and as far north as Flin Flon, Man. East/west operations extend from Montreal to Winnipeg.

EIC has stated that it intends to expand Bearskin—as the company has done with the three other airlines it has purchased. EIC currently operates in two niche business segments: aviation and specialty manufacturing. The aviation segment consists of Calm Air International LP, Keewatin Air LP, and Perimeter Aviation LP. "Every airline that EIC has invested in has grown substantially," notes Parnham.

### BRS at a Glance

- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 1997 (became an ALPA-represented pilot group when CALPA merged with ALPA)
- **Number of pilots:** 68
- **Pilot bases:** Thunder Bay, Ont.; Winnipeg, Man.; Sioux Lookout, Ont.
- **Headquarters:** Sioux Lookout, Ont.
- **Operations:** Daily scheduled passenger service between Flin Flon, Man.; Kitchener Waterloo, Ont.; Montreal, P.Q.; Winnipeg, Man.; and communities in between
- **Fleet:** 14 Metroliners, with 2 more in the coming months



For the pilots of Calm Air, who fly scheduled passenger and cargo service throughout northern Manitoba, Nunavut, and the western shores of Hudson Bay and the high

airline currently has 16 pilots who will fly that aircraft.

The MEC's main focus for 2012 will be preparing for negotiations, as the pilots are rounding out year five of a six-year contract, which is set to expire in early 2013. The MEC is looking forward to negotiations and working to improve on what the pilots feel is "an already very good contract," says Cowan. "The number of pilots who are leaving the airline has dropped significantly since last year, and we've been

work hard for the pilots."

With benefits such as an employer-matched pension plan, an employee share purchase plan, a fairly flexible schedule, and competitive salaries, Calm Air provides a lifestyle appealing to many pilots, Cowan says. "We're still a fairly young pilot group, but the demographics are slowly changing," says Tremaine. "I think we will see more pilots staying at Calm Air for the balance of their careers."

"As pilots on the job, we always have the support of our

# Calm Air

## Pilots Catch An Updraft And Reap Positive Changes

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

Arctic, positive change is definitely in the wind.

"It's an exciting time at the company," says Capt. Dan Cowan, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. The number of pilots increased by approximately 15 to 20 percent in 2011, and the parent company, Exchange Income Corporation (EIC), is bringing on new aircraft—D328 jets to begin service in early 2012 for medical services travel as a result of the company's securing a contract with the government of Nunavut.

Though an increase in new hires, expansion of service, and newly acquired equipment are welcome, these gains come with certain challenges. "We welcome the positive direction in which we're heading, but there is also a huge challenge for the MEC to ensure that our new pilots are provided with the proper tools to succeed and that our MEC continues to use the resources available to us," says Cowan. "One big lesson I've learned is to use the expertise and experiences of other ALPA pilot groups such as the one at Bearskin Airlines, which is also owned by the EIC." Cowan also credits the Jazz MEC with assisting them through the complex process of bringing on new equipment and routes by helping to establish a formula for pay rates for the D328. The



A Calm Air HS748 on short final at Churchill Airport in Manitoba, Canada.

expanding and changing our fleet consistently enough to keep the training department here very busy."

Cowan and the other MEC members, Cpts. Lance Tremaine, the vice chair, and Richard Cenerini, the secretary-treasurer, believe frequent communication is necessary to remain a strong and unified pilot group. "We try to communicate as much as we can with our pilots," Cowan says. "The MEC flies a full block so there is always time for members to meet and talk with us to express concerns and offer opinions," notes Cowan. "The MEC leaders will do our absolute best to make sure we

company, and one of our goals will be working with management to ensure that Calm Air continues to be an airline that pilots aspire to work for, not leave from," says Cowan.

### CMA at a Glance

- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 1997
- **Number of pilots:** 117
- **Operations:** Scheduled passenger and cargo service throughout northern Manitoba and Nunavut, the newest and largest territory in Canada, including destinations along the western shores of Hudson Bay and into the high Arctic.
- **Pilot bases:** Thompson and Winnipeg, Man.
- **Headquarters:** Thompson, Man.
- **Fleet:** 6 Saab 340s, 1 Hawker Siddeley HS748, 2 ATR 72s, 5 ATR 42s, and 2 D328s to be put into service in early 2012



Landing on gravel runways and ice strips might not be the norm for many pilots, but for the pilots of Canadian North, ALPA's newest member, it's all in a day's work. Canadian

worked many days without receiving credit," says Kampen. "Now we receive credit for everything, which means more days off for our pilots.

"Our first agreement before joining ALPA was only 10 pages," says Kampen. "We now have a document with more than 70 pages." The pilots' new collective agreement represents more than two years of hard work by Capt. Jake Nagy, the Negotiating Committee chairman, and Negotiating Committee members Capts. Derek Thomas, Chris Drossos, Scott Hyslop, and Kampen. The group had been involved since the early stages of the negotiations and worked together to achieve an agreement that reflects the goals of the pilot group, including advances in employment protection for long-term job stability, pay rate increases, and overall quality-of-life improvements.

"Over the last year, we have worked to bring about several positive changes regarding Dash 8 operations, including improved scheduling with less deadheading, better overnight accommodations, and increased pay for new hires," Kampen says. The MEC leaders continue to encourage the pilots to communicate with one another so that everyone is informed and to get involved with their union.

The company has been hiring more pilots, especially ones who are eager to make a career at the airline. "Canadian North is a great place to work and offers just the right mix of stability and challenging work," notes Kampen. "A junior pilot on the Dash 8 can expect long eight-day pairings and on the 737 can expect a lot of back-of-the-clock flying."

In April 2011, ALPA's Executive Board unanimously approved a merger with the Canadian North Pilots Association, and the 100-plus pilots of Canadian North overwhelmingly voted in favor of the merger, which became effective on May 1. Canadian North is ALPA's ninth Canadian pilot group, joining eight other Canadian pilot groups—Air Transat, Bearskin, Calm Air, CanJet, First Air, Jazz, Kelowna Flightcraft, and Wasaya.

Canadian North is a major provider of scheduled passenger and cargo services from Edmonton, Alb., and Ottawa, Ont., to points throughout the Northwest Territories and Nunavut. The airline offers nonscheduled charter flights throughout Canada and the U.S. Canadian North is headquartered in Yellowknife, NT, and operates a fleet of B-737-200s, B-737-300s, and Dash 8-100s. 

# Canadian North

## Smooth Landings Ahead For ALPA's Newest Pilot Group

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

North pilots fly throughout the Nunavut and Northwest Territories, often operating in demanding environments where instruments like magnetic compasses are unreliable. "The work we do is very challenging but extremely rewarding," says Capt. Chris Kampen, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. "We operate in a



**A Canadian North B-737 at Doris Lake Aerodrome, a privately owned ice runway located on Doris Lake, Nunavut, Canada.**

very harsh but beautiful part of the world that very few people will ever see."

Since joining ALPA in 2011, the pilots have seen a whirlwind of change, including successfully ratifying a new collective agreement. "The transition from the Canadian North Pilots Association to ALPA has been a smooth one," Kampen says. "And pilot morale has improved considerably from what it was in the past."

Positive change also includes the implementation of a credit system that was previously nonexistent for Canadian North pilots. "In the past, we

### CNP at a Glance

- Flightcrew members joined ALPA: May 1, 2011
- Number of flightcrew members: 130
- Bases: Edmonton and Calgary, Alb.
- Headquarters: Yellowknife, NT
- Operations: Scheduled flights and cargo services throughout Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, as well as charter operations throughout Canada and the U.S.
- Fleet: B-737-200s, B-737-300s, Dash 8-100s



While CanJet pilots are in the midst of their busiest travel season of the year, operating chartered airline service to 52 airports in 21 different countries, their

# CanJet

## Pilots Gear Up for Negotiations Amid Busy Winter Season

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

Master Executive Council (MEC) is gearing up for what promises to be a packed schedule for 2012: contract negotiations. "Our first priority will be negotiating a contract that our members will approve while at the same time ensuring that it gives our company the flexibility it needs to continue expanding

MEC officers collaborated with the pilots' Negotiating Committee to conduct a group-wide survey. Capt. Mark Blok, the Negotiating Committee chairman, and Committee members Capts. Bruce Dandurand, Todd McLeod, and Pierre Charland received valuable input from the survey that reflects the pilots' bargaining priorities—improving working conditions and enhancing job security. "The survey feedback provided us with a strong foundation for the Negotiating Committee that helps shape our bargaining strategy," Sirros says.

Sirros and the MEC remain committed to reinforcing the communications initiatives they began implementing two years ago. The pilot leaders are meeting their goal of providing their members with timely and relevant information in various ways. The MEC consistently circulates informative messages, such as the CanJet Payday Hotline, CanJet *FastReads*, MEC bulletins with urgent, time-sensitive data, and the *CanJet Compass* quarterly MEC newsletter.

"Unity goes a long way in accomplishing our goals," says Sirros. "And to that end, timely and relevant communications are key factors that enable us to foster unity and conduct a successful negotiations campaign." Ensuring that the pilots are informed about hot-button issues and up-to-date on negotiations progress is crucial to their success in 2012 and beyond. "We don't want our pilots to believe rumours they hear on the line," declares Sirros, who—along with the other MEC officers, Capt. Jon Mason, the vice chair, and Charland, the secretary-treasurer—urges the pilots to

obtain credible information by reading the MEC's communications or talking with an ALPA volunteer.

New for 2012 is the Pilot-to-Pilot (P2P) program in which CanJet pilot volunteers help convey negotiations updates and job-related information to their colleagues. P2P members typically receive more detailed information and briefings on MEC and ALPA activities, which enables them to answer questions or address concerns that pilots may have. "We will continue to use a variety of ALPA's communications tools because these tools truly make a difference," says Sirros.

Since CanJet is a single-council pilot group, the MEC and Local Executive Council representatives hold monthly meetings in different formats and venues. "We try to engage all the pilots through both formal and informal events," notes Sirros. The MEC organizes casual pilot unity-building events, which have been beneficial for the pilots and families who can attend.

Though the commitment required from volunteers can often be overwhelming, Sirros says the MEC would always like to see more CanJet pilots take the time to get involved in the Association. "The pilots who volunteer their time will be amazed by the people they meet and the resources available to our group," says Sirros. "ALPA truly is a great union." 



Capt. Pierre Charland, left, and Capt. Alex Sirros.

and building the business," says Capt. Alex Sirros, the pilots' MEC chairman.

CanJet pilots became ALPA members in July 2006 and ratified their first collective bargaining agreement under ALPA representation in May 2008. In anticipation of the four-year agreement's expiration, the Association sent CanJet management a notice to bargain on Dec. 1, 2011, stating the pilots' intention to begin negotiations in January.

### CJA at a Glance

- Pilots joined ALPA: 2006
- Number of pilots: 123
- Operations: Provides subcontracting services to vacation charter airlines
- Pilot headquarters: Halifax, N.S.
- Pilot bases: Vancouver, Toronto, Montreal
- Fleet: 11 B-737-800s



In 2011, the flightcrew members of Capital Cargo International Airlines weathered a journey that took a number of twists and turns, and which has led them to face an uncertain future.

# Capital Cargo

## Flightcrew Members Face Uncertain Future

By Barbara Gottshalk  
ALPA Lead Communications Specialist

They began the year six months into a new contract that provided pay increases, work rule and quality-of-life improvements, and a signing bonus. The company had made a number of positive changes the year before, and the group's Master Executive Council (MEC) was cautiously optimistic about working toward more positive changes.

The MEC engaged in strategic planning, developing short- and long-term goals. As part of this process, they discussed potential changes the group might face in the future, and created a Transition Committee to help the MEC prepare for contingencies related to issues such as furloughs, changes to flight-time/duty-time regulations, and industry consolidation.

Meanwhile, the MEC and Grievance Committee were kept busy handling a number of grievance and disciplinary cases. But working closely with ALPA's Representation Department staff, they successfully resolved these cases, and all the crewmembers got their jobs back. As a result of their efforts, they ended the year without any grievances.

The first twist came in July when DB Schenker, the parent company to BAX Global and one of Capital Cargo's largest customers, announced plans to adopt a new operating model that would phase out the dedicated air cargo

network supported by Capital Cargo and Air Transport International—both of which, along with ABX Air, Inc., are subsidiaries of Air Transport Services Group, Inc.

BAX subsequently closed its facility in Toledo, Ohio, and pulled out of the U.S. domestic expedite service. Following that event, F/O Chuck Hill, MEC chairman, and Capt. Steve Mathis, MEC vice chairman, met with the airline's president, Dennis Manibusan, and its vice president of flight operations, John Vestal, to address these issues



Capital Cargo Capt. Brian Frassetto in the cockpit.

scenarios were presented to us in which there would not be any furloughs. All the scenarios led to one common outcome."

In late September, the chain of events that began with the closing of the Toledo hub resulted in the announcement of crewmember furloughs and downgrades.

With each new twist and turn, the MEC has used the resources provided by ALPA and relied on support from the Association. In handling the furloughs, the MEC officers, Grievance and Negotiating Committee chairmen, and ALPA's Representation Department immediately took action to ensure that management has complied and continues to fully comply with the crewmembers' contract.

Throughout all of these challenges, the MEC called on the crewmembers to do their part to help achieve the goal of a "stable, solvent, strong, and unified Capital Cargo" by maintaining their focus and professionalism. The flightcrew members answered that call, continuing to deliver extremely high performance ratings. The crewmember leaders are also helping to advance this goal by working with management to meet the B-757 performance requirements to gain more flying and transition to a single fleet.

Looking forward, despite the many hurdles in front of them, the crewmembers remain determined and focused on the road ahead. While they may encounter more twists and turns, with the support and resources of their union, they are prepared to do their part to help ensure the continued viability of their airline. ☺

and further discuss Capital Cargo's strategic plans.

Recognizing the importance of keeping the crewmembers informed, the MEC activated the Transition Committee and brought it up to speed on the situation. The Pilot-to-Pilot (P2P) Committee was also reactivated to answer crewmembers' questions, relay facts, and quell rumors.

In an August 1 letter to crewmembers about the meeting with management, Hill was realistic about the future. "Unfortunately, no

### CCI at a Glance

- Pilots joined ALPA: 2007
- Number of flightcrew members: 137
- Headquarters: Orlando, Fla.
- Operations: Capital Cargo is an aircraft, crew, maintenance, and insurance (ACMI) carrier that provides airport-to-airport transportation services both domestically and internationally
- Crewmember bases: Home-based
- Hub city: Miami, Fla.
- Fleet: Currently operates B-727-200s and B-757-200 PCFs—all aircraft are freighter conversions

**D**uring the last weeks of 2011, the pilots of Comair created a new slogan for their pilot group: "Comair Rebuild." After numerous setbacks spanning more than a decade, Comair

after the company revealed the plans for Comair's fleet. "We would be going from an airline with almost 100 airplanes to one with just 44 in the span of two years. The MEC immediately reached out to management to find ways to mitigate the number of furloughs, while stepping up communications with line pilots."

vided a detailed picture of how our airline was doing. We went to the negotiating table with a bird's-eye view of Comair's books. This not only gave us the important data, but also added force to our proposals at the table."

The pilot group has also worked on early-out and voluntary furlough plans that would mitigate the involuntary furloughs. In addition, pilot leaders have reached out to find career opportunities for Comair pilots, securing preferential interviews at airlines around the world. Each week, the MEC includes a list of these jobs in its update, adding new ones regularly. Internal communications go far beyond just the computer screen. The Negotiating Committee, the MEC, and a revitalized Pilot-to-Pilot Committee visit coffee shops in Cincinnati and Detroit airports, offering both coffee and information to pilots as they start their day.

Today's Comair looks vastly different from the pilot group of just 10 years ago, when the pilots were just returning to work after 89 days on the picket line—the longest pilot strike in recent memory. The pilots then came back to a contract hailed as setting a new benchmark. In 2007, the pilots lost much of what they had gained as they gave contract concessions to help Comair come out of a bankruptcy that threatened the airline's very existence.

Today, these pilots find themselves in a similar position with a similar goal of saving their company from within. The slogan Comair Rebuild is not just words on a luggage tag, but a goal that will move this pilot group—and this airline—toward a more stable future. 

The downsizing of Comair has affected not only most of the pilots' career expectations, but also their daily commute. The majority of the senior pilots had been based in Cincinnati, Ohio. But even before the announcement, flying had drastically decreased out of this airport, with many of the pilots now based in Detroit and, for a brief time, New York. Comair pilots who once simply drove down the street to go to work now find themselves competing for an ever-decreasing number of jumpseats to and from Detroit.

In addition to the downsizing announcement and commuting difficulties, the pilots began negotiating a new contract in October 2010. Although other pilot groups have achieved significant improvements, the Comair pilots realize that they are negotiating in a far different environment. Their negotiations have focused on cost savings and efficiencies that they hope will lessen the financial effect of a new contract on the pilot group, while also improving Comair's ability to compete effectively in the marketplace.

"We used ALPA's resources to support us and help us find cost-saving opportunities in every facet of our contract," continues Jensen. "ALPA's Economic & Financial Analysis Department pro-

pilots have recommitted themselves to rebuilding their airline and achieving the long-term goals of not just survival, but also renewal. Currently in negotiations for a new contract, the pilot group is working to build internal support for a contract that may apply to only half the pilots currently on the property.

Less than two years ago, Comair was poised for growth. Furloughs had been canceled, and Delta, Comair's parent

company, had allocated additional flying to the airline. Pilots had every reason to be optimistic about the future. However, on Sept. 1, 2010, that bright future dimmed. Instead of planning for growth, the company announced that, by the end of 2012, the fleet and the pilot group would be cut in half.

"The extent of the restructuring was surprising," comments Capt. Erik Jensen, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman, who was elected just two months

# Comair

## Beginning to Rebuild

By Jen Lofquist, Senior Communications Specialist



**A Comair CRJ100ER with new livery at Boston Logan International Airport.**

### CMR at a Glance

- Pilots joined ALPA: 1983
- Number of pilots: 1,100 active, 150 furloughed
- Headquarters: Erlanger, Ky.
- Pilot domiciles: Cincinnati, Ohio; Detroit, Mich.
- Fleet: 40 CRJ100/200s, 15 CRJ700s, 13 CRJ900s



For the pilots at regional airline CommutAir, the overwhelming question for 2011 wasn't if they would get their first contract, but when. The group had been in negotiations since

# CommutAir

## Pilots Reach Finish Line

By Rusty Ayers, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

early in 2009 and applied for mediation in late 2010. And, as the year rolled on, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) felt that stronger measures might need to be taken before the negotiations would come to a close.

Then in early November, just days after ALPA's Executive Board had approved a \$500,000 Major Contingency Fund grant to support the MEC's strategic planning efforts, the pilots and management reached a tentative agreement (TA), a goal the pilots had sought since organizing as a union and joining ALPA in 2008.

On Nov. 29, 2011, 78 percent of the group's eligible members cast ballots in favor of the TA. The new contract took effect on December 1, with pilots immediately getting a substantial pay raise on that date. Under the new pay rates, current captains should see average increases of 30 percent in their hourly pay rate over the duration of the agreement, with first officers seeing increases of approximately 38 percent (not including the possibility of upgrade).

"Before the contract, we were the second-lowest-paid turboprop pilots in the country. Now we fall within the range of the industry standard," says Capt. Jay Dougherty, the pilots' MEC chairman. "Our objective

is to make CommutAir a place where pilots can earn a comfortable and secure living during their time at the airline, whether they plan to ultimately move on to a larger carrier or retire here. We now have the building blocks in place to achieve that."

The agreement also includes improved scheduling rules aimed at reducing pilot fatigue, more time off, caps on the pilot share of health insurance premiums, and many new ways for pilots to accrue pay above and beyond their scheduled flying, including "block or better" language and pay for deadheading. Before securing the contract, CommutAir pilots were paid only for the scheduled block time and received no compensation for deadheading, two key items targeted by the pilot group during negotiation surveys.

Flying out of bases at Cleveland Hopkins International Airport and Newark Liberty Airport, CommutAir started the year as a Continental Connection carrier, then repainted its aircraft to United Express livery as part of the larger airlines' ongoing merger.

A major fleet upgrade took place in the spring when the airline acquired five 50-seat Dash 8-Q300 turboprops from a European airline to accompany its fleet of 16 37-seat Q200s. While still in federal mediation at that time, the MEC was able to work with management to smoothly integrate the new aircraft.

CommutAir has been hiring at a rapid pace, both to replace pilots who leave to fly for larger airlines and to beef up staffing since the Q300s arrived. The pilot group has grown by more than 30 percent in the past year,

increasing from 130 pilots to more than 170.

"It's been a remarkable year," Dougherty says. "We've expanded our fleet by 31 percent with the addition of the Q300s and are now flying the largest aircraft type in CommutAir's history. We continue to provide extremely efficient lift for our new code-share partner, United; and by removing ourselves as a lowest common denominator, we believe we've strengthened the airline piloting profession as a whole. None of this would have been possible without the commitment to safety and professionalism of all the CommutAir pilots."

With a new contract in place, this young MEC's next challenges are educating both the pilot group and the company on the details of the agreement, ensuring that management abides by it, and preparing for whatever the future may bring.

"In the current environment with so much consolidation in the industry, it's always wise to have a plan in place in case a merger partner shows up," says Dougherty. "With ALPA's vast resources and expertise available to us, strategic planning will be a big item on our to-do list for 2012. And we look forward to continued prosperity for our pilots and our airline during the year."



Capt. Aaron Adrian performs a walk-around preflight inspection.

### CMT at a Glance

- **Founded:** 1989
- **Number of pilots:** 172
- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 2008
- **Headquarters:** South Burlington, Vt.
- **Pilot bases:** Cleveland, Ohio; Newark, N.J.
- **Operations:** CommutAir flies to 25 cities in the Midwest, Northeast, and Canada under a capacity purchase agreement with United Airlines
- **Fleet:** 16 Bombardier Dash 8-Q200s, 5 Dash 8-Q300s

Compass began operations on May 2, 2007, as a Northwest Airliner operator, flying a single Bombardier CRJ200. But during the airline's brief tenure, Compass Airlines pilots have

has undergone consolidation, Compass Airlines has experienced some growth, and Barnhart expects to see approximately 40 new hires this year. However, with change comes the occasional conflict.

agement plan to exchange opens this November. In preparation, the pilot leaders will spool up their negotiating structure and begin the process of educating members about what collective bargaining entails. The MEC will also survey its members to gauge contract priorities.

The Compass pilots recently elected new leaders. Capt. Daniel Schultz, Michael Hafemann, and Justin Berg will assume their roles as MEC officers on March 1. In addition, these pilots will represent seniority blocks of the pilot members, which include pilots domiciled in both Detroit and Minneapolis.

Barnhart notes that 2011 was the airline's first full year with Trans States Holdings. Following Delta's purchase of Northwest, Delta sold Compass to Trans States Holdings in July 2010. Barnhart says that with this change, there has been more pressure "to wring efficiencies out of the operation."

But despite the ownership switch and the changing Compass landscape, Barnhart says that "in terms of the day-to-day operations, it's been business as usual."

One of the pilot group's biggest concerns is resolving issues regarding training for air transport pilot certificates and pilot-in-command type ratings. In January 2011, the FAA rescinded the company's ability to issue these ratings based on recent changes the airline had made to these programs. In September, the FAA restored the airline's ability to issue the ratings after it instituted an upgraded curriculum the FAA approved. But management has been slow to reinstate the training. Consequently, the MEC filed a group grievance to ensure that 70 of its members receive the training they are due, per the collective bargaining agreement. The MEC hopes to settle this matter soon.

The pilots are also concentrating on the flow-through agreement they have with Delta, which enables Compass pilots to flow up to the mainline carrier during hiring phases. Delta terminated this arrangement after it sold Compass to Trans States, but the pilots on the seniority list at the time were "grandfathered," enabling them to continue to transition to Delta. Approximately 350 of the current 418 pilots on the current Compass pilot seniority list have flow-through rights at Delta.

Compass pilots will soon shift their attention to contract negotiations, which are slated to begin later this year. The pilots' collective bargaining agreement does not become amendable until April 2013, but the pilots and man-

witnessed their fair share of change. Pilots who started with the airline four-and-a-half years ago have watched its operating certificate pass from Northwest Airlines to Delta Air Lines to Trans States Holdings.

These days, the airline serves as a Delta Connection carrier and maintains a fleet of 36 Embraer 175s and 6 Embraer 170s.

Throughout this transition, the Compass pilots have managed to maintain their focus on the demands of their operation. "We enjoy a decent working relationship with Compass management," says Capt. Vince Barnhart, the pilot group's Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. "We don't necessarily agree on everything, but both parties keep an open-door policy."

This approach to communications and the pilots' collective resilience and flexibility have allowed them to adapt to the airline's shifting business model during the downturn in the economy and a turbulent airline industry. At a time when domestic flying

# Compass

## Pilots Keep Their Focus

By John Perkinson  
Staff Writer



A Comair Delta Connection aircraft gets deiced before taxiing.

### CPZ at a Glance

- **Founded:** Compass Airlines was created as a Northwest Airlines subsidiary and began operations on May 2, 2007
- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 2007
- **Sale and acquisition:** On July 1, 2010, Delta Air Lines sold Compass to Trans States Holdings, Inc., which announced it would operate Compass separately from its other airlines
- **Number of pilots:** 418
- **Operations:** Compass operates more than 170 flights daily throughout the United States and Canada as Delta Connection
- **Pilot bases:** Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.; Detroit, Mich.
- **Headquarters:** Minneapolis, Minn.
- **Fleet:** 36 Embraer E175s, 6 Embraer E170s



The Continental pilots continued to demonstrate their resilience and ability to ward off threats in 2011 as the Continental-United merger progressed. The year began

# Continental

## Pilots Demonstrate Strength, Resilience Through Merger

By Amy Flanagan, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



DAN LANGWORTHY

**Pilots march on Wall Street to show their frustration with the slow progress of the Continental-United merger.**

with the pilots' strictly enforcing a favorable arbitration award over management's decision to test the limits of the pilots' collective bargaining agreement. Management violated scope provisions by assigning the CO code to United feeder flights using jet aircraft with more than 50 seats, culminating in another ALPA win with a second award and monetary damages in October.

In June, Continental pilots also fought against management's other attempts to seek shortcuts to the merger process. One grievance challenges management's violations of the contract's scope provisions that prevent fleet reductions during the period of separate operations if the reductions are related to the merger. Another grievance challenges management's failure to maintain the same or higher twin-aisle ratios of scheduled Continental-United flying that existed before the merger.

Says Capt. Jay Pierce, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman, "We have let management know that there is a simple way to achieve the benefits it wants from the merger—negotiate with the pilots and reach agreement on a new joint contract. Until then, we will do everything necessary to ensure that management's contractual obligations under our existing collective

bargaining agreement are adhered to."

Strong contract enforcement is only one aspect of the pilots' multi-pronged approach for dealing with the merger and with management. In support of contract negotiations for the joint collective bargaining agreement (JCBA) and to build unity throughout both pilot groups, Continental pilots reached out to their fellow pilots at United. Pilots and families participated in an extensive series of joint Family Awareness events and the pilots held joint MEC meetings and joint informational pickets, including one featuring more than 700 pilots in what became the largest pilot picketing event ever held on Wall Street.

Continental pilots regularly take their message to the news media and to the investment community, joined where possible by United pilots, to remind all that true merger progress and management's touted merger synergies cannot be realized without pilots, a ratified JCBA, a successful seniority list integration, and a combined pilot group. The final prong is a unified Joint Negotiating Committee that works seamlessly to represent all Continental and United pilots in its contract negotiations efforts.

While progress on the JCBA has been disappointing and significantly slower than desired or expected, the pilots have reached agreements in principle on nine sections and one letter of agreement. The effort continues to push forward, and the pilots remain unified in their demands for a contract that reflects their contributions to the airline.

The Continental pilots have much to look forward to in 2012. United Continental Holdings, Inc. continues a pattern of growth that began in 2011 with the last of the returning Continental furlougees completing training and rejoining their fellow pilots back on the line, a new Los Angeles, Calif., base, and hiring new Continental pilots. The much-anticipated B-787 Dreamliner may finally make its arrival. And while the new United was awarded a single operating certificate in November 2011 and the Continental call sign slipped into the history books, two things are clear: until a JCBA is ratified, the pilots' seniority lists are integrated, and the two pilots groups are combined, Continental will continue to operate separately from United, and the proud and storied Continental heritage will be firmly entwined in the DNA of the future combined airline. The operational practices, training methods, and safety culture borrowed from Continental, as well as the cultural heritage of the airline and the Continental pilots, will be melded with the strengths of United and its pilots to forge a new airline that exemplifies the best from each legacy airline.

Pierce adds, "We've made some progress in 2011, but there's still a lot of work to do in 2012. The JCBA remains a top priority, as do all of the steps necessary to ensure that the promised benefits from the Continental-United merger that are due the pilots are realized. We are fortunate that we have the resources of ALPA available, and the commitment of ALPA leaders, to help us achieve these goals."

### CAL at a Glance

- Pilots joined ALPA: 2001
- Number of pilots: 4,763
- Pilot bases/hubs: Newark, N.J.; Houston, Tex.; Cleveland, Ohio; Guam; Los Angeles, Calif.
- Headquarters: Chicago, Ill.
- Fleet: 25 B-787-8s/-9s (on order), 22 B-777-200ERs, 10/16 B-767-200ERs/-400ERs, 41/21 B-757-200s/-300s, 37/36/127/12/32 B-737-500s/-700s/-800s/-900s/-900ERs



Pilot input has been a critical component of the Delta Master Executive Council's (MEC) ability to improve pilot quality of life outside of the traditional Section 6 process. Meaningful

Working Agreement (PWA) and determines if they will become part of the formal negotiations process, possibly resulting in contractual improvements. Other non-contractual recommendations, such as computer automation changes to improve scheduling, are implemented by the company on a mutually agreed upon time line.

the training environment, currency and proficiency improvements, pilot training feedback improvements, and indoctrination and requalification requirements for pilots returning from leaves of absence. At the November 2011 MEC meeting, the MEC ratified an additional letter of agreement codifying many of these training improvements.

# Delta

## Making Gains Outside of Section 6

By Kelly Regus, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist, and the Delta Communications Committee

and incremental contractual gains made in areas of scheduling, training, and information technology are a strong demonstration of how the MEC has remained consistently focused on strategic opportunities. One of the MEC's most effective and innovative strategies has been the op-

Three different optimization teams have been busy at work throughout 2011: the Scheduling Optimization Team (SOT), the Training Optimization Team (TOT), and the Information Optimization Team (IOT). Now under consideration for formation is a Benefits Optimization Team.

### The Information Optimization Team

The IOT began its work in August 2011. This "think tank" developed recommendations to reorganize Flight Ops information systems. The Team was tasked with determining what technology systems should be in place by 2015. This work will encompass the technology needs of Delta pilots in both the training and line environments.

While the optimization team concept continues to be a very useful tool, the MEC also remains committed to broad contract improvements and has been in full-scale preparations for upcoming Section 6 negotiations since the beginning of 2011.

Recent Section 6 preparations include distributing contract history and contract comparison documents, developing a contract survey, holding road shows, and communicating with pilots through the Delta Pilot Network.

ALPA is proving that using unique negotiating strategies to quickly adjust tactics in an ever-changing landscape is benefiting ALPA pilots with contractual gains outside of the traditional process. The optimization team concept is yet another example of how ALPA continues to evolve to enhance pilot contracts and the quality of life for ALPA-represented pilots.

### The Scheduling Optimization Team

The SOT's mission included an extensive examination of many areas of the scheduling sections of the Delta PWA, including the use of seniority on reserve trip assignments, bidding for recurrent training schedules, assignments to short call reserve, and more. The Team considered more than 650 individual line pilot suggestions before beginning discussions. The work of the SOT resulted in a groundbreaking letter of agreement (LOA) unanimously ratified by the MEC last May. This LOA provided significant scheduling-related improvements.

### The Training Optimization Team

The TOT has built on the SOT's success. In August 2011, the TOT presented the MEC with several training-related recommendations and improvements such as improvements in training opportunities for pilots experiencing difficulty in



Capt. Tim O'Malley speaks at a Section 6 preparations road show.

timization team philosophy. Optimization teams consist of subject-matter experts from the Delta MEC and Delta Flight Operations who focus on creating recommendations for clearly defined improvements. The teams work in a condensed time frame, and one of the most important components of the process is that many recommendations are driven by line pilots.

Line pilots have the opportunity to offer input before each team begins its work. Once the teams have drafted a set of recommendations, the results are provided to the MEC to consider. The MEC discusses those recommendations that affect the Pilot

### DAL at a Glance

- **Number of pilots:** 12,148
- **Joint ventures and alliances:** Delta is a member of the SkyTeam Alliance and participates in joint ventures with Air France-KLM-Alitalia
- **Operations:** Delta and its connection carriers fly to more than 338 destinations in 59 countries on six continents
- **Pilot bases:** Atlanta, Ga.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Detroit, Mich.; Los Angeles, Calif.; Memphis, Tenn.; Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.; New York City, N.Y.; Salt Lake City, Utah; Seattle, Wash.
- **Hub cities:** Amsterdam; Atlanta, Ga.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Detroit, Mich.; Memphis, Tenn.; Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.; New York-JFK; Paris-Charles de Gaulle; Salt Lake City, Utah; Tokyo-Narita
- **Headquarters:** Atlanta, Ga.
- **Fleet:** More than 700 mainline aircraft consisting of A319s, A320s, A330s, B-737s, B-757s, B-767s, B-777s, B-747s, DC-9s, MD-88s, and MD-90s



Contract negotiations can often be a test of a pilot group's unity, resolve, and professionalism—all qualities that Evergreen crewmembers, the Master Executive Council

cluded without an agreement. The Committee held strong to what the crewmembers wanted, and items that remained open included provisions in the areas of compensation, travel, scheduling, vacation, and duration.

Communications Department staff, they have implemented a communications action plan to keep their members apprised of events and reach external stakeholders with their message of wanting to secure a fair contract. The Strategic Planning and Strike Committee, Pilot to Pilot, and Communications Committees continue to provide accurate information to the members and support to the MEC and Negotiating Committee.

Turning to the future, this support from the union will be critical. Evergreen crewmembers are facing several challenges and opportunities. The financial health of Evergreen Aviation International, the holding company of Evergreen International Airlines, is not encouraging, and late last year Standard & Poor's placed the company on a credit watch "with negative implications." In December, nine Evergreen pilots were furloughed and several captains were downgraded, bringing the total number of furloughees to 43. Citing a downturn in scheduled and ad hoc revenues and subsequent low utilization of aircraft and crew as the driving factors in the cuts, management declined to speculate on when they might expect to recall those pilots. The MEC is taking steps to ensure that these crewmembers receive assistance provided through ALPA's Furloughed Pilots Support Program.

The main challenge and opportunity is, of course, achieving a new contract. With their history as a guiding example, Evergreen crewmembers will face these challenges and opportunities with unity, resolve, and professionalism. 

The Committee members returned from the September session more resolved than ever to bring home the fair contract the crewmembers deserve. Believing that continued talks offer the best long-term outcome for all involved, they explored opportunities—both on and off the record—to resolve the remaining open issues. They focused on a more informal approach—away from the National Mediation Board (NMB) and company headquarters—using smaller teams of negotiators. The crewmembers' representatives used the time between sessions to resolve many outstanding grievances that would set the stage for positive results at the upcoming meetings.

In mid-December, the Negotiating Committee and management representatives met in Las Vegas to discuss their options. As a result, the parties were able to resolve all contract issues except for two—money and business-class travel—and complete language for the tentatively agreed-to sections. Having come so much closer together, the crewmembers' negotiating team has engaged the NMB in discussions about how to finish this overdue contract.

And they are drawing on ALPA's resources to complete negotiations. ALPA professional negotiators from the Representation Department and Economic & Financial Analysis Department analysts have been integral throughout the process. Working with

(MEC), and the Negotiating Committee have exhibited to the fullest in persevering through another year of bargaining.

The crewmembers are working under a contract, long past its amendable date, that was negotiated by their previous independent labor organization. Under ALPA representation, they began last year with a strong show of unity: high participation in a strike authorization ballot resulted in 97 percent of crewmembers voting for a lawful strike, should one become necessary to conclude contract negotiations. Although their goal has always been to secure a fair contract, the MEC leaders believed this was a necessary step to demonstrate to management their unity and commitment to achieving that goal.

While the Negotiating Committee was able to narrow the issues during formal, mediated negotiations in February and May 2011, minimal progress was made on economic items. The Committee went back to the table in September resolved to complete negotiations and called on management to come to the talks "ready to address long-neglected economic issues."

During the bargaining session, the parties reached tentative agreements on several sections, but talks con-

# Evergreen

## Pilots Resolved to Bring Home Long-Overdue Contract

By Barbara Gottshalk  
ALPA Lead  
Communications  
Specialist



Evergreen F/O Ron Svoboda.

### EIA at a Glance

- **Flightcrew members joined ALPA:** 2007
- **Number of flightcrew members:** 228
- **Headquarters:** McMinnville, Ore.
- **Pilot base:** New York (JFK)
- **Operations:** With a fleet of 8 B-747s, Evergreen specializes in charter and contract freighter operations around the globe



November 2011 marked the end of a long, distinguished era for pilots of the former Continental Express. Now operating under a single certificate with Atlantic

in Houston, Tex., early that morning. The new company launched its rebranded operation of the merged airlines under the ExpressJet name on Dec. 31, 2011.

While Atlantic Southeast and ExpressJet are now operating under a single certificate, several hurdles still must be cleared before the airlines can truly be merged. Of chief importance is combining the two ALPA pilot groups. The pilots have been actively negotiating for a joint collective bargaining agreement (JCBA), a prerequisite for the integration of the two groups, since May 2011. Their goal: a contract that recognizes the sacrifices, contributions, and value of the collective pilot group. The pilots are focusing on making improvements to pay, work rules, and benefits.

The pace of negotiations began to stagnate early in the process despite Atlantic Southeast's publicly stating its desire to expeditiously reach a fair JCBA with the pilots. Negotiations have picked up in recent months, and to date the parties have reached tentative agreements on 11 of the 33 contract sections and have opened 7 others for discussion. These include the process for furlough and recall, grievances, and other administrative items.

In 2012, the pilots expect to begin negotiating scope, compensation, retirement and insurance, scheduling, and other benefits- and economic-related items. They are optimistic that, if senior management remains engaged in negotiations, members will have a JCBA to ratify by the end of 2012.

With negotiations well under way, the pilots are also working to merge other areas of business and begin

preparations for becoming one group. One such example is pilot assistance. The ExpressJet pilot assistance program, which has served as a model for many other pilot groups, has helped numerous pilots and family members over the years successfully recover from a drug and/or alcohol dependency. Senior management also recognizes the effectiveness of the pilots' recovery program and has committed to collaborating on a company-wide program to augment the airline's drug and alcohol policy.

Staffing is also an issue that the pilots are closely watching. Weather and other operational issues in early 2011 exacerbated already inadequate staffing levels that wreaked havoc on pilots' quality of life. To address the staffing issue, all furloughed pilots were recalled, roughly 250 pilots were upgraded, and approximately 500 pilots were hired. Additionally, agreements were reached with the Atlantic Southeast MEC and management to address staffing challenges facing that side of the operation. Pilots who would otherwise be furloughed from Atlantic Southeast will have the opportunity to join ExpressJet as new-hire pilots. Similar agreements were reached in 2010, allowing then-furloughed ExpressJet pilots to join Atlantic Southeast as new hires.

"We have the unique ability to assist our fellow pilots," notes Belcastro. "These, however, are only stopgap measures. For the company to fully realize the benefits of this merger and capitalize on future prospects, we need to be one pilot group under one contract. Only then will there be no limit to what our company can achieve."

# ExpressJet

## The Legacy Continues

By Lydia Jakub, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

Southeast, the airline that began as several commuter carriers cobbled together by Continental Airlines in the early 1990s is one step closer to completing its merger with Atlantic Southeast to become the largest independently owned regional airline in the United States.

"ExpressJet pilots have a long his-



From left, Capts. Adam Rennecker, Stace Robeson, and Chris Belcastro at the EAA International Learn to Fly Day in Lorain, Ohio.

tory of providing outstanding service to our partners and passengers," says Capt. Chris Belcastro, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. "As we work to forge a new path with our fellow Atlantic Southeast pilots, we look forward to the opportunities ahead to build upon this legacy."

Atlantic Southeast management acquired government approval for a single operating certificate and surrendered the ExpressJet certificate to the FAA on November 17. The surviving certificate went into effect on November 18, following ExpressJet's last "Jetlink" flight, which arrived

### XJT at a Glance

- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 2004
- **Number of pilots:** More than 2,700
- **Operations:** Flies more than 40,000 passengers per day to 130 destinations in the United States, Canada, Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean with approximately 1,300 departures daily
- **Pilot bases:** Chicago, Ill.; Cleveland, Ohio; Houston, Tex.; Newark, N.J.
- **Headquarters:** Atlanta, Ga.
- **Fleet:** 242 EMB-145s



The year 2011 proved to be a busy one for the FedEx Master Executive Council (MEC) as the pilots ratified a new collective bargaining agreement, implemented new safety

to facilitate completing the remaining contract sections when Section 6 bargaining resumes, without ruling out the possibility that smaller agreements might be reached along the way.

made history in 2011 with the establishment and first meeting of Council 123 in Cologne, Germany. This is the first European foreign duty assignment (FDA) for the FedEx pilots, but Local Council 123 has roots that date back to the Pan Am Express presence in Berlin in the late 1980s. "We are quite proud of the pilots who have stepped forward to represent our company in this new endeavor. We look forward to supporting each of these individuals as we continue to grow and represent the FedEx pilots in Europe," says Stratton.

The MEC recently met to make the duration clause decision. After an extensive briefing by ALPA's Economic & Financial Analysis and Representation Departments and the FedEx Negotiating Committee, the MEC unanimously voted to retain the 3 percent raise and continue with interim discussions. "Given the difficult external factors that we faced, our 2011 achievements in collective bargaining were nothing short of extraordinary. It is a tribute to the hard work of our

The 4,460 FedEx Express pilots are spread across the globe, represented by seven councils located in four domiciles, including FDA pilots

## FedEx Express

### Pilots Make History in 2011

By Courtney Bland, ALPA Communications Specialist

programs, and opened a new foreign duty assignment base. "The past year brought many changes for the FedEx pilots. We are encouraged by these positive changes, and we look forward to continuing our work into 2012," says Capt. Scott Stratton, the pilots' MEC chairman.

This past year started with the announcement that the pilots and management had reached a tentative agreement after barely six months of bargaining. The pilots ratified the agreement in March. While the agreement included across-the-board increases to hourly pay rates, increases to domestic and foreign per diem rates, three essential safety programs, and other positive changes, the unique aspect of the agreement was the duration clause. This clause gave the pilots the unilateral choice to make the agreement a 12-month or 24-month agreement with a decision due by January 2012. Tied to this decision was an across-the-board increase in hourly pay rates, which would take effect the first day of the March 2012 bid period if the pilots decided to run the agreement through February 2013.

In conjunction with the duration clause, the parties agreed to engage in scheduled interim discussions on a continuing basis. As agreed to by the parties, the purpose of the interim discussions was



Cargo containers are loaded onto a FedEx A300.

Negotiating Committee, the solid sensibility of our pilot group, and the thorough work of our MEC," says Stratton.

This past year was a milestone for safety at FedEx. After years of discussion, the MEC welcomed the implementation of an ASAP and a FOQA program. "Over the last several years, countless volunteers and ALPA staff have worked to achieve these safety programs at FedEx. We owe each of these volunteers and staff members our collective thanks for their efforts," says Capt. Pete Harmon, the pilot group's central air safety chairman.

The FedEx pilots also

in Hong Kong and Cologne. Understanding the challenges imposed by a global group, the MEC introduced a number of communication techniques designed to better reach pilots, including interactive conference and video calls, video messages, e-mails, a revamped website, and text notification.

With more than 375 airports served worldwide, the airline has an extensive and varied fleet. The pilots deliver approximately 3.5 million packages and 11 million pounds of freight daily to more than 220 countries and territories, including every address in the United States.

#### FDX at a Glance

- **Pilots joined ALPA:** June 1993–1996; rejoined ALPA in June 2002
- **First ALPA contract:** October 2006
- **Number of flightcrew members:** 4,460
- **Headquarters:** Memphis, Tenn.
- **Fleet:** 62 B-727s, 45 B-757s, 14 B-777s, 71 A300s, 53 A310s, 75 MD-10s, 63 MD-11s



The high Arctic is a harsh environment in which poor weather, spotty communications, and extreme isolation can make risk a constant companion for aviators. It's

# FirstAir

## Crewmembers Carry On After Resolute Crash

By Rusty Ayers, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

a setting the pilots and flight engineers of First Air recognize and overcome every day.

On Aug. 20, 2011, the First Air family received a tragic reminder of the dangers of Arctic flying. First Air Flight 6560, a B-737-200 combination passenger/freighter, crashed in bad weather while on ap-



PHOTO BY JEREMY STODNEY (FIRST AIR)

**A First Air L-382 Hercules delivers mining supplies to Koper Lake, Ontario.**

proach to a gravel airstrip near the tiny hamlet of Resolute in Nunavut Territory, 600 miles north of the Arctic Circle.

Twelve of the 15 people aboard the aircraft were killed, including the entire crew: Capt. Blair Rutherford, F/O David Hare, Purser Ann Marie Chassie, and Flight Attendant Ute Merritt, the wife of another First Air pilot.

"We were extremely fortunate that the Canadian military was conducting a major air disaster exercise in the Resolute area at the time of the accident and was able to rapidly marshal medical teams and crash investigators to the site within minutes," says Capt. Jamie Biggs, the pilots' Master Executive Council

(MEC) chairman. "Thanks to their rapid response, the three survivors received almost immediate treatment and were medevaced to hospitals in the south."

Canada's Transportation Safety Board was expected to release limited preliminary investigation information in early 2012, but it appears that the crew was executing an approach or missed approach when the aircraft crashed near the remote Resolute Bay Airport.

For the First Air crewmembers, who joined ALPA in 2008, Flight 6560 has renewed their already intense focus on safety. Staff and volunteer accident investigators from ALPA's Air Safety Organization are working with the crewmembers and the airline as they integrate the lessons learned from the crash into the airline's safety management system, implemented by the airline in 2009.

"It takes a tragedy like this to really learn the depth and breadth of ALPA's resources," says Biggs. "We received support from the Association within hours. There was an investigator from First Air's Central Air Safety Committee at the crash site; an ALPA Accident Investigation Board member and Engineering & Air Safety Department staff in Ottawa, Ont.; CIRP counselors from other ALPA pilot groups in Edmonton, Alb., and Yellowknife, NT; and dozens of people helping us from ALPA's offices in Herndon, Va., and elsewhere. Both ALPA's Canada Board and the ALPA Emergency Relief Fund were able to quickly provide financial support to help the families."

Flight 6560 was the worst but not the only challenge in 2011 for First Air, which is wholly owned by the Inuit

people of Quebec through the Makivik Corporation. This past year, the Canadian government privatized the Food Mail program, which had provided subsidized air freight services to remote northern hamlets. The change posed a financial loss to Arctic airlines like First Air and Canadian North, which relied on government subsidies for a large portion of their revenues.

The airline also weathered competition from Air Canada, which briefly tried—but failed—to establish a foothold in the northern market by offering service to Iqaluit, First Air's northeastern hub on the coast of Baffin Island. It still faces pressure from other competitors like WestJet and CargoJet, but it strengthened its advantage as a native-owned corporation when it partnered with another Inuit company to expand its service to the Kivalliq region of northwestern Nunavut Territory early last year.

First Air crewmembers recently observed the first anniversary of opening negotiations for a new contract. Talks have gone slowly of late due to the Flight 6560 accident and a changeover in management, but Biggs says the pressure is on the company to jump-start the talks with an eye toward reaching a tentative agreement in 2012.

"Our major goals are to create standardized contract language to bring our agreement into line with scheduling and work rule practices at other airlines," he says. "We're also very focused on improving the quality of life for our crews since they spend a great deal of time away from home out of the country on charter operations, or in the north living in some pretty rugged conditions."

### FAB at a Glance

- **Founded:** 1946, as Bradley Air Service, First Air is now owned by Makivik Corporation
- **Number of crewmembers:** 154
- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 2008
- **Pilot bases:** Ottawa, Ont.; Yellowknife, NT; Iqaluit, NU; and Edmonton, Alb.
- **Headquarters:** Kanata, Ont.
- **Operations:** First Air provides scheduled passenger and cargo service between 30 northern communities as well as charter service worldwide
- **Fleet:** 7 B-737-200s (four in combi configuration for cargo), 1 B-767F, 9 ATR 42-300s, 2 ATR-72s (all combi), 2 Lockheed L-382 Hercules



**H**awaiian Airlines pilots had much to be thankful for in 2011, when the 11th-largest U.S. airline added service, expanded its fleet, and increased pilot hiring by almost

# Hawaiian

## Pilots Say Mahalo to 2011

By Rusty Ayers, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**Hawaiian's newest model, the Airbus A330-200.**

25 percent despite global natural disasters and rising fuel costs.

Fueled by a growing fleet of state-of-the-art airliners, forward-thinking management, and rising demand for airline service in Asia, Hawaiian is rapidly expanding and building its reputation as a luxurious hub carrier bridging two continents with a global vacation destination in between.

"The high point of the past year for us has been the introduction of the A330. It has been the game-changer we expected it to be, and all of our growth has come thanks to the new opportunities that airplane has given us," says Capt. Chris Elley, the pilot group's Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman.

Ordered as the eventual replacement for the airline's shorter-legged and less-efficient B-767-300s, Hawaiian now has five Airbuses, with 16 more on order, including four that will come into service this year. A half-dozen A350-300s will begin entering the fleet in 2017, giving the airline even more capacity and range.

The introduction of the A330s had an immediate effect. Hawaiian began service to Seoul-Incheon, South Korea,

last January. Following up on its successful entry into the Japanese market at Tokyo-Haneda in 2010, Hawaiian began service to Osaka in July and has announced plans to begin service to Fukuoka this spring. The airline also now flies a daily nonstop to Sydney, Australia, and can reach the entire island continent through a new code-share agreement with Virgin Australia.

At the same time that it expands internationally, Hawaiian is strengthening its domestic footprint by adding additional flights to Maui, Hawaii, and Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Jose, Calif., in 2012. But its biggest announcement came in November, when the airline unveiled plans to begin a daily nonstop between Honolulu and New York-JFK beginning in June. It will be Hawaiian's first foray into the East Coast market.

The airline is also beefing up its interisland service between Honolulu and Kahului, Lihue, Hilo, and Kona, adding three leased B-717s and buying its existing leased fleet of 15 B-717s as a cost-saving measure.

"We're fortunate to have been continually hiring during this economic downturn," Elley says. "We've added 92 new pilots to the group in the past year. We expect to hire at least 40 or 50 more in 2012 and could have 600 pilots or more by this time next year."

Having ratified a lucrative new contract in early 2010, the MEC has been able to focus on welcoming its new pilots and spreading its unique Aloha spirit to the Hawaiian community. The MEC created a new Community Service Committee last year to formalize the charity work

that is one of the pilot group's trademarks. The pilots are also extremely active with ALPA's national Education Committee, talking about the profession and the airline industry to hundreds of students in the islands each year.

It's that tradition of reaching out and helping that led former Aloha Airlines captain and current Hawaiian F/O Mimi Tompkins to help build ALPA's Critical Incident Response Program, an achievement for which she was bestowed ALPA's Pilot Assistance Award for 2011.

And when a devastating earthquake and tsunami ravaged northern Japan in the spring, the pilot group donated more than \$14,000 to Red Cross disaster relief.

"I couldn't be prouder of how the Hawaiian pilots' ohana [family] has stepped up to help members of our global, as well as local, communities who are in need," says Elley. ☺

### HAL at a Glance

- **Number of pilots:** About 540
- **Headquarters:** Honolulu, Hawaii
- **Bases:** Honolulu, Hawaii, and Seattle, Wash.
- **Operations:** As the only transpacific airline based in the Hawaiian Islands, Hawaiian's widebody fleet flies to all major markets on the U.S. West Coast and will inaugurate East Coast service to JFK in June. International operations are conducted to American Samoa; Tahiti; Sydney, Australia; Manila, Philippines; Tokyo and Osaka, Japan; and Seoul, Korea, with new service to Fukuoka, Japan, set to begin in April 2012. Inter-island, the airline operates approximately 120 daily flights connecting the islands of Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii. Founded in 1929 as Inter-Island Airways, Ltd., Hawaiian is the oldest continually operating passenger airline in the United States
- **Fleet:** 15 B-717-200s, with 3 more being acquired; 16 B-767-300ERs; 5 A330-200s, with 16 more on order. Firm orders: 6 A350-300XWBs, along with more Airbus options

The future looks bright for Island Air and its pilots. In August 2011, the company announced that it was looking to expand its fleet with new airplanes to possibly take

advantage of future business opportunities. "This is good news for our pilots and our company," says F/O Michael Yanovitch, chairman of the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC). "Opportunities exist for Island Air to expand its service in the market, and we have long

encouraged management to reevaluate its business plan to support such growth. However, it remains to be seen whether the company will

be able to capitalize on these prospects."

While Hawaii tourism and travel continue to recover from the global recession, business at Island Air has remained relatively constant over the past several years due to the airline's loyal customer base. The company, which had at one time planned to expand its operations to compete with similar airlines in the market, quickly reversed course at the beginning of the economic downturn. Management instead hunkered down into survival mode and focused on retaining its core business—a niche market providing quality interisland service to local travelers and visitors. This strategy

seems to have paid off. Island Air reportedly returned to profitability last year and remains Hawaii's leading regional airline with more than 30 years of service in the market. Last year, for the first time since 2007, Island Air hired new pilots, and it plans to hire additional pilots in 2012. Most of the hiring has been due to attrition; however, it may also indicate that the company is seriously considering its growth potential.

The timing could not be better for the pilots, who are already two years into their four-year contract and will spend much of this year preparing to open Section 6 negotiations. A subtle shift in the makeup of the pilot group has taken place since the last round of negotiations. In the past, pilots have thought of a position at Island Air as a stepping-stone to a career at a major airline. Today, many pilots are choosing to make a career at Island Air. Of chief importance to the pilots in the next contract will be reasonable improvements in pay, benefits, and work rules, as well as clarification to some of the contractual language.

Currently, the pilots have a few outstanding grievances. One of the primary disputes centers around segment pay. Per the contract, pilots are to be paid the greater of actual flight time, scheduled block time, or scheduled average time. These times are to be reviewed every two years and adjusted as necessary based upon historical average times. Flight times are also to be recorded in minutes, but converted to tenths of an hour and averaged based upon rounding upward to the nearest tenth of an hour.

Unfortunately, this has not been happening. The company has instead been paying pilots based upon its own creative calculations. The pilots have discussed the issue with management on numerous occasions to no avail. If this dispute is not resolved within the next few months, it will be slated for arbitration at the earliest available date.

Having a long-standing grievance (and possible arbitration) is something of a new phenomenon for Island Air pilots, as disputes have historically been resolved quickly through settlement discussions with management. Some changes within the management structure in recent years have stalled any such progress. The management team has since stabilized, and the relationship with the pilot group has slowly improved.

"It's an exciting time at Island Air," Yanovitch says. "We work in a fiercely competitive environment and recognize that there are several challenges ahead for our pilots, our company, and our industry. The key to success is always in the people, and Island Air has some of the most dedicated professionals in the cockpit. We will continue working to advance our pilots' careers and ensure the viability of our company." 

## Island Air

### Charting a Course to A Brighter Future

By Lydia Jakub, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



Capt. Will Hall, left, and F/O Jonathan Bernath prepare for takeoff.

#### AIS at a Glance

- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 1989
- **Number of pilots:** 50
- **Operations:** Approximately 36 daily flights plus charter service to all eight major airports in Hawaii
- **Service:** Island Air is Hawaii's leading regional airline, serving airports on all major Hawaiian islands with approximately 346 weekly flights between the islands of Oahu, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, Kauai, and the island of Hawaii
- **Fleet:** 4 Dash 8-100s



# Jazz

## Pilots Focus On Strategic Planning, Restructuring Committees

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

**Ready for takeoff: Jazz Capt. David Berezuk gives the thumbs up from the cockpit of his B-757.**

The pilots of Jazz have never backed away from challenges, and this year will be no exception. With their contract firmly in place, the Jazz Master Executive Council (MEC)

is focused on helping the company, Jazz Aviation, LP, evolve as a carrier of choice worldwide. "Jazz pilots will continue to work hard, providing passengers with safe and reliable transportation," says Capt. Claude Buraglia, the pilots' MEC chairman. "We're hoping that 2012 will bring opportunities for the airline to expand into new markets."

Buraglia and the other MEC officers, Capt. Terry McTeer, vice chairman; Capt. Chris Lohse, secretary; and Capt. Barry Turner, treasurer, are developing a new strategic plan for 2012. Included in the plan is a complete restructuring of the committees to ensure the most effective use of resources. "During our fall MEC meeting in Toronto, we began to look at our current committee structure to ensure that we have the most efficient means to deliver services to our members," Buraglia says. "A key component to achieving the goals outlined in the MEC's strategic plan is to ensure that the pilots have the appropriate support structures."

Some integral parts of the pilots' support structure are effective communications, including regular MEC bulletins; pilot unity-building events, which give pilots an opportunity to meet in an informal environment with their elected MEC officers; and the new flagship publica-

tion, *Jazz Chronicle*. The MEC believes that new-hire pilots should be educated about the benefits of belonging to an international union. "This education should also include an understanding of the nuances and language in our collective agreement so that Jazz pilots are able to defend the agreement when necessary," says Buraglia.

In 2010, the pilot group steadfastly pulled together to land an industry-leading contract that produced significant pay, pension, and benefit gains. After an intense collective bargaining round in Canada that spanned 14 months and caught the attention of airline indus-

try analysts and members of Parliament, Jazz pilots ratified a six-year collective agreement effective through June 30, 2015. The pilots achieved increases in their pay rates, per diem, and defined-benefit plans and a reduction in benefit costs. Unlike more traditional pilot contracts, the Jazz contract compensates pilots for their status, either as a captain or first officer, which is adjusted on an annual basis to reflect the current fleet composition regardless of the equipment they fly.

Last year, the pilots and the airline solidified a charter contract with Thomas Cook PLC, the world's second-largest tour operator, flying six B-757s to winter getaway destinations. The five-year charter contract has spread

beyond its original eastern operation and now includes travel from Vancouver and Calgary to Jamaica, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic. Although the charter flying is currently a small percentage of the airline's business, it has provided the company an opportunity to diversify.

"The most effective tool we possess is a unified and professional pilot group that demonstrates strong support for the MEC," says Buraglia. "That support is fundamental to our collective success as we move



to meet the inevitable challenges that will face us, as well as exploiting the opportunities that will present themselves in the future."

### JAZ at a Glance

- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 1997
- **Number of pilots:** Approximately 1,500
- **Operations:** Jazz carries approximately 27 million passengers per year on 800+ flights daily to 85 destinations across Canada, the United States, the Caribbean, Mexico, and South America. Under its contract with Thomas Cook, Jazz flies weekly flights from eastern Canada to destinations in the Caribbean and Mexico
- **Pilot bases:** Vancouver, B.C.; Calgary, Alb.; Toronto, Ont.; Montreal, P.Q.; Halifax, N.S.
- **Headquarters:** Halifax, N.S.
- **Fleet:** 135 airplanes, including Dash 8-100/300/400s, Bombardier CRJ100/200/705s, and B-757s

For 2012, Kelowna pilot leaders are working with management to find ways to help grow the airline and expand the fleet and route structure. During the past year, the company

As the larger of only two Canadian freight airlines with widebody equipment, Kelowna Flightcraft has carved out a unique niche in Canada's air cargo market and is poised for substantial growth. Canadian commerce depends heavily on the pilots' carrying nearly a million pounds of freight across the country each night, flying B-727s, Convair 580s, and DC-10s on behalf of Purolator Courier and Canada Post.

The next round of bargaining for Kelowna pilots occurs in 2014, allowing Wynn-Williams and the other members of the MEC, Capt. Derek Porter, vice chairman; Capt. Serge Fortier, secretary; and Capt. Kenneth Morrison, treasurer, to thoroughly plan and prepare for negotiations. "Our strategic goals are to continue to work with the company to

five nights in a row, reaching the required monthly minimums fairly quickly, but this may not be possible if new regulations come into effect," says Wynn-Williams.

The current Canadian civil aviation regulations are not considered to be effective in mitigating fatigue in the current operating environment. New flight-time/duty-time regulations are not expected for at least two years, the time needed for the Canadian regulatory process. Recommendations from the Crew Fatigue Risk Management Group, a subgroup of the Canadian Aviation Regulation Advisory Council (CARAC), will be submitted for review in September 2013. The Canadian government will likely not complete the regulatory drafting process until sometime in 2015.

With members spread across six time zones and thousands of miles from coast to coast, it has been challenging to keep the group connected and well informed about the many benefits ALPA membership provides, but it is a priority for Wynn-Williams. "We want to keep the pilots as aware as we can about the broader ALPA and industry activities that affect not only Flightcraft pilots, but all Canadian pilots," Wynn-Williams says. "We must always be prepared for change."

For 2012 and beyond, the MEC is planning to enhance communications initiatives to keep the pilots better connected. For the first time in its history, Flightcraft pilots have a Communications Committee chair, S/O Mireille Pare. The MEC has also initiated a new Dispute Tracking System for grievances, which is accessible to the pilots.

## Kelowna Flightcraft

### Pilots Focus On Growth And Fatigue Management For 2012

By Lynn Konwin, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

increased the number of pilots to accommodate demand at bases in Saskatoon, Sask.; Hamilton, Ont.; Vancouver, B.C.; and Kelowna, B.C. "Pilots who come to Kelowna Flightcraft find that they can build a career here, the airline is no longer just a stepping stone," says F/O Tim Wynn-Williams, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. "We



A Kelowna B-727 undergoes deicing before takeoff.

will continue to seek improvements in our next contract and to stay abreast of our peers in the industry."

With their contract firmly in place, which became effective in November 2009, the pilots are maintaining steady momentum. Their current agreement represents a big step forward for all Kelowna pilots. "Substantial advancements were made in the contract that resulted in significantly less pilot turnover," says Wynn-Williams. "It gives us greater job security and has provided additional jobs in Kelowna and Hamilton."

ensure contract compliance and safety on a day-to-day basis. Long-term, we are starting to convene our Wages and Working Conditions Committee in preparation for the next round of bargaining," notes Wynn-Williams.

The MEC is also looking at ways to incorporate a comprehensive Fatigue Risk Management System (FRMS) into the next contract. Many Kelowna pilots fly during late night and early morning hours, potentially making their pairings at odds with FRMS guidelines. "At present, many of our pilots operate

#### KFC at a Glance

- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 1997 (became an ALPA-represented pilot group when CALPA merged with ALPA)
- **First ALPA contract:** Nov. 1, 1997
- **Number of pilots:** 125
- **Headquarters:** Kelowna, B.C.
- **Pilot bases:** Hamilton, Ont.; Vancouver, B.C.; Halifax, N.S.; Thunder Bay, Ont.; Regina, Sask.; Calgary, Alb.; Kelowna, B.C.
- **Fleet:** B-727s, Convair 580s, DC-10s



The beginning of each year is historically a time for reflection and making resolutions that will help ensure that the New Year is better than years past. This certainly

# Mesa

## A Challenging Road Ahead

By Lydia Jakub, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

holds true for the pilots at Mesa Air Group, who are working to bring about some much-needed improvements to their contract and preparing for the challenges ahead.

“Competition in the regional market is fierce, and we’ll soon see it heat up as

successfully protected the pilots’ contract in bankruptcy, and no concessions were given. It was a painful process, however, that left approximately 400 pilots furloughed and hundreds more displaced from their domiciles and/or downgraded, taking as much as a \$34,000 annual pay cut.

On March 2, the pilots began direct negotiations to improve their pay, work rules, and benefits. They had made significant strides in their 2008 negotiations, especially given the precarious financial state of the company at the time. However, as is the nature of pattern bargaining, other pilot groups have since raised contract standards.

From the beginning of their 2010 negotiations, the pilots made clear to senior management that “Current Book Won’t Fly!” and quickly reached tentative agreements on seven non-economic sections. The pace of negotiations, however, has slowed dramatically in recent months. Despite having some of the lowest pilot costs in the industry, the company has attempted to extend many current contract sections and has even sought some concessions. The pilots reiterated their mantra and put senior management on notice that they needed to come to the table with reasonable proposals—doing otherwise could cause attrition to spike, jeopardizing the company’s current code-share agreements and any future flying opportunities.

Low staffing combined with high attrition has already stretched the operation thin and wreaked havoc on pilots’ quality of life. The company has begun the recall process and anticipates that roughly half of the current furloughed

pilots will return. The pilots also expect hiring to begin by midsummer if the rate of attrition remains constant. Until then, the MEC is working to improve the efficiency of pilot schedules.

Contract enforcement also remains a high priority for the MEC. Only 23 grievances are currently open due to the effectiveness of the pilots’ grievance system, which includes monthly meetings with senior management to resolve issues before a grievance is filed and regular grievance mediation meetings with professional mediators. Arbitration dates are scheduled through the first half of 2012, and additional dates are being solicited. On the docket will likely be a couple of complex, high-dollar cases involving improper displacements that occurred before and during the bankruptcy.

Looking ahead, the regional industry and Mesa in particular are facing some challenging times. The pilots are preparing for every possible scenario and are actively engaged at all levels within ALPA. Their involvement in the US Airways Express Pilots Alliance (USEPA), which consists of Air Wisconsin, Mesa, Piedmont, Pinnacle, PSA, and Trans States pilots, is just one example. Among other things, USEPA members are collaborating on bargaining strategies and other methods to promote career portability within the US Airways Express system.

“Mesa may be out of bankruptcy, but it isn’t out of the woods yet,” concludes Kolodziejczyk. “We want our company to succeed, and we will continue working to protect and advance our pilots’ careers through any means possible.”



One of Mesa’s CRJs.

airlines start competing for business and pilots,” says F/O Marcin Kolodziejczyk, chairman of the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC). “Our dedicated group of pilots ensures that Mesa consistently ranks at the top in terms of performance for our partners, and their efforts have not gone unnoticed around the industry. Whether Mesa is able to succeed in returning to viability could very well depend on its ability to retain and attract qualified professionals. This starts at the bargaining table.”

After 13 months in bankruptcy, Mesa emerged as a stand-alone operation in February 2011. ALPA suc-

### MAG at a Glance

- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 1987
- **Number of pilots:** Approximately 1,300, including 374 on furlough
- **Operations:** Mesa Air Group includes go! and Mesa Airlines and operates as United Express and US Airways Express under contractual agreements and independently as go! in Hawaii. Serves 96 cities, 37 states, Canada, and Mexico with 465 daily departures
- **Bases:** Charlotte, N.C.; Chicago, Ill.; Honolulu, Hawaii; Kahului, Hawaii; Lihue, Hawaii; Phoenix, Ariz.; Washington, D.C.
- **Headquarters:** Phoenix, Ariz.
- **Fleet:** 75 aircraft, including CRJ100s/200s, CRJ700s, CRJ900s, Dash 8-200s



In the past year, the North American Airlines pilots have followed a steady course toward advancing their goals and preparing for the future. Led by a dedicated Master Executive Council

Gallo, the pilot group's MEC chairman.

While a number of grievances were favorably resolved with assistance from ALPA's Representation staff, others went to arbitration, and the pilot group awaits the outcome of those decisions. Although several additional grievances were withdrawn due to lack of contract language, they did help to highlight areas that the pilots will need to focus on in their upcoming negotiations (their contract becomes amendable this fall).

The Scheduling Committee is also involved in contract enforcement efforts, closely monitoring company policies and practices related to the contract's scheduling section. The MEC is using this information to help develop guidelines and procedures to enforce the contract and to communicate these issues to management. The Committee recently resolved several issues—reserve bypass and trip trade—of importance to the group. In January 2012, the Committee began participating in line/pairing construction to ensure that the company is complying with the "like flying" provision of the contract.

Safety is another priority for the pilot group. The pilots are heavily involved in aviation safety initiatives, both at their airline and on the ALPA international level. Pilot participation in the airline's ASAP has been strong, enabling the Event Review Committee to make recommendations that have resulted in tangible improvements in several areas of operation. As the program matures, the ASAP Committee's goal is to enhance communications to the pilots via timely, substantive reports.

Because North American operates chartered and scheduled service for the U.S. military, fatigue is an issue of critical importance to the pilots. The Association's legislative Call to Action program has provided them with a forum to join forces with other ALPA pilot groups to advocate for science-based flight-time/duty-time regulations that encompass all airline operations.

Through ALPA, the MEC has established a robust committee structure to take better advantage of the resources, programs, and activities provided by the Association to defend their contract and advance the pilot group's goals.

In 2011, the MEC added an Aeromedical Committee, a Flight Standards and Training Committee, and a FOQA Committee. And the Communications Committee established a Twitter account to enable the MEC to communicate in real time with the pilot group.

Last fall, after more than three years since the company's last hiring, the airline brought on four new pilots—a sign that leads the pilots to be optimistic about the future. Looking ahead to their upcoming negotiations, they also see an opportunity to address many of the issues left unanswered in their current contract.

As the pilots prepare for bargaining, they will draw on ALPA's vast experience and expertise to promote their collective interests, just as they have in defending their rights under the current contract.

With such a solid union foundation, the pilots of North American are well equipped to face the future.

# North American

## Pilots Build on Strong Union Foundation to Prepare for Negotiations

By Barbara Gottshalk, ALPA Lead Communications Specialist

(MEC) and supported by a group of very engaged committee volunteers, the pilots have made great strides in a number of key areas.

A top priority for the pilot group has been contract enforcement. The MEC and Grievance Committee, together with ALPA's Representation Department and members of certain specialty committees, have aggressively challenged several sections of the current collective bargaining agreement, which was negotiated and ratified when the pilots were represented by the International Brotherhood of Teamsters. They have also focused on establishing a relationship with management through the Association that is built on a foundation of respect for their agreement.

These efforts have resulted in several agreed-upon memorandums of understanding (MOUs), such as the Technology Reimbursement MOU, which the MEC and management signed in November 2011. "We recognize the benefits of technology-based training for both pilots and the company—especially given the nature of the airline's worldwide operations and the pilots' lifestyle and schedules—and the MEC worked cooperatively with the Flight Operations Department over many months to formulate this MOU," says Capt. Al



**Capt. Selim Wehber prepares for takeoff from Atlanta en route to Leipzig, Germany.**

### 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:** 4 B-757-200s, 5 B-767-300ERs



For decades, Piedmont Airlines was in a class of its own among airlines. As the successor to Allegheny Airlines and one of the oldest airlines in the United States, Piedmont

# Piedmont

## Fighting a War Of Attrition

By Jen Lofquist, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



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**A US Airways Express Dash 8 at Albany International Airport.**

has a rich history and an important place in the airline industry. Now that legacy is being threatened—not by job loss, but by a large number of pilots leaving the airline for bluer skies. Pilot attrition, which began in 2010, continued throughout 2011, with many pilots opting to get new jobs elsewhere.

“We are still a very senior pilot group, with some 25-year pilots in the captain’s seat. This is an unusual situation for a relatively small fee-for-departure airline,” says Capt. Bruce Freedman, the pilot group’s Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. “Fee-for-departure airlines are usually home to younger pilots, but Piedmont was the exception. We take great pride in our experienced pilot group, but now many of those pilots are deciding to leave.”

In 2010, the company offered senior pilots early retirement. Many with the lowest seniority numbers opted to take the package and start new careers elsewhere or simply leave the airline piloting profession altogether. Since then, however, many more pilots than expected have chosen not to remain with the airline. And the ones leaving Piedmont aren’t just the senior pilots. Those resigning are distributed throughout the seniority list.

Although Piedmont is not in a growth phase, this attrition has forced the company to seek out new pilots. Many of the new Piedmont hires are newer pilots—recent college or flight school graduates. Piedmont is expected to hold new-hire classes well into 2012, until all the available pilot positions are filled. However, with continued attrition, it may be a constant hiring process.

“We’re seeing many new faces on our property, and that should continue throughout the next year,” comments Freedman. “So the challenge is to bring them up to speed not only regarding Piedmont Airlines, but also regarding how ALPA works.”

Currently, the pilots are focusing on negotiating a contract that seems no nearer than it did a year ago. In May 2009, the pilot group began bargaining for a contract, working with pilots from other fee-for-departure airlines to reduce management’s attempts to whipsaw one pilot group against another.

In April 2010, the pilots applied to the National Mediations Board (NMB) for mediation, and in August, the company and pilots began meeting with an NMB-appointed mediator. The negotiations team currently meets with the company often—and still with a mediator—but little progress has been made.

In August 2011, the pilot group took another hit when its base at LaGuardia was officially closed, a result of a controversial swap of slots between Delta and US Airways, the owner of Piedmont Airlines. In 2009, US Airways agreed to trade to Delta 125 daily pairs of inbound

and outbound flights from gates at LaGuardia Airport. In return, Delta would give to US Airways 42 daily slots at Reagan National Airport, as well as some international flying rights. Piedmont pilots were stunned at the news, as this move eliminated the flying the group performed for US Airways out of New York. The final closure leaves Piedmont with five bases at much smaller airports in the mid-Atlantic states: Roanoke, Va.; Salisbury, Md.; New Bern, N.C.; Charlottesville, Va.; and Harrisburg, Pa.

“We knew that when this deal went through, we wouldn’t have our base at LaGuardia anymore,” remembers Freedman. “And the two years that we waited for it to go through made it that much worse. Instead of just hearing the news, and going on from there, our future hinged on approvals and negotiations that were completely out of our control.”

In addition to the challenges of attrition, contentious negotiations, and a base closure, the pilots are also facing the specter of an aging fleet. Piedmont flies only Dash 8 turboprops. At a time when many fee-for-departure airlines are moving away from 50-seaters to larger aircraft, the Dash 8, although extremely fuel efficient, has only 50 passenger seats.

“We’ve got a lot of speed bumps in the road ahead of us,” Freedman says. “But we can’t let these speed bumps become roadblocks. As a pilot group, we have been members of ALPA for more than half a century. During that time, Piedmont pilots have faced some tough times and have come out on the other side. There is every reason to believe we will do it again.”

### PDT at a Glance

- Pilots joined ALPA: 1952
- Number of pilots: 377
- Headquarters: Salisbury, Md.
- Pilot domiciles: New Bern, N.C.; Charlottesville, Va.; Roanoke, Va.; Harrisburg, Pa.; Salisbury, Md.
- Fleet: 44 DHC-8s



The fast-paced negotiations that joined Pinnacle, Mesaba, and Colgan pilots through a joint collective bargaining agreement in 2010 resulted in the pilots' overwhelmingly

Virtually all of the pre-JCBA outstanding contract grievances were resolved at Mesaba and Pinnacle by the fall—a significant achievement considering Pinnacle had well in excess of 300 outstanding grievances.

began harmonizing the committee structure, adopted a new policy manual, discussed ways to unify the nearly 3,000 pilots as the integrated seniority list was implemented, coordinated officer crew room visits, and scheduled a special MEC meeting in December to work with Association staff to develop a comprehensive strategic plan.

“Our combined MEC is working through our differences in a cooperative manner,” says Wychor. “Merging seniority lists is never easy, and integrating three pilot groups, with three separate cultures, could have been a difficult process had it not been for the desire of all parties involved to make this transition as seamless as possible.”

The pilots continued to work with management as the transition progressed. They successfully negotiated an additional \$250,000 in annual company-funded ALPA flight pay loss (for a total of \$350,000 annually) as part of a package that reduced the company's overall training burden until early summer 2012.

In early December, the MEC learned that Pinnacle was facing financial challenges. As of press time, management has asked the pilots for a 5 percent wage reduction and for additional training relief.

While the news was unexpected, the pilot leaders quickly rallied to mobilize all available resources to address the problem. “Based on our ability to work together during the last year,” Wychor says, “we're confident that we will capably and constructively work through any upcoming challenges.”

ALPA placed pilots who were well educated on the new agreement in the System Operations Control Center of each airline to help train schedulers on the new contract and to prevent contract violations from occurring. This initiative was so well received that management agreed to pay half of the flight pay loss of the pilots involved. The pilots participated in scheduler training and helped to build an important bridge with each airline's scheduling personnel.

As the contract was implemented, each of the airline's Merger Committees worked to integrate the pilot seniority lists into one, a challenging feat with two carriers, but even more daunting when three pilot groups are involved.

The three premerger groups agreed to a process that did not include using attorneys, saving the pilots the significant expense associated with merger costs through an assessment. Arbitrator Richard Bloch issued his ruling in June, and the integrated seniority list was implemented in July.

Beginning in fall, the newly formed Pinnacle Master Executive Council (MEC) elected new officers: Capt. Tom Wychor, chairman; Capt. Jonathan Allen, vice chairman; Capt. Matt Green, treasurer; and F/O Zohrab Grigorian, secretary. At the first combined MEC meeting in October, the new leaders

ratifying the agreement in early 2011. “One Contract | One List | One Voice” was the 2010 slogan that propelled the Pinnacle-Mesaba-Colgan Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) through negotiations to achieve an industry-leading tentative agreement just five months after Pinnacle bought

Mesaba in July 2010.

That same energy carried over into 2011 when votes were cast by nearly 87 percent of the eligible Pinnacle, Mesaba, and Colgan pilots, and 90.5 percent of those pilots voted in favor of the agreement. The move paved the way for integrating one of the world's largest regional airlines.

With a solid contract in place, the JNC went to work implementing the new agreement at the three companies. To enhance pilot-management cooperation, the pilot leaders actively engaged in various alternative dispute resolution procedures with management personnel and achieved a high degree of success.

## Pinnacle

### Pilots Hope 2012 Builds On Success Of 2011

By Kimberly Seitz, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist



**Capt. Tom Wychor (far left), MEC chairman, and Capt. Paul Hallin (third from right), Negotiating Committee chairman, address a recent ground school class.**

#### PCL at a Glance

■ **Pilots joined ALPA:** 1988 (as Express Airlines before changing its name to Pinnacle in 2002); purchased Colgan Air in 2009 and Mesaba Airlines in 2010

■ **Number of pilots:** 3,100

■ **Operations:** More than 1,500 daily flights for Delta, United, and US Airways to 188 airports across the United States, Canada, Mexico, and Belize

■ **Pilot domiciles:** Atlanta, Ga.; Detroit, Mich.; Memphis, Tenn.; Minneapolis, Minn.; New York's JFK and LaGuardia; Boston, Mass.; Washington Dulles, Va.; Newark, N.J.; Charleston, W.V.; Houston, Tex.

■ **Headquarters:** Memphis, Tenn.

■ **Fleet:** 141 Canadair CRJ200s, 60 CRJ900s, 30 Q-400s, 50 Saab SF340s



After limited progress at the bargaining table for much of 2011, PSA pilots are optimistic that the end of negotiations is within sight. "It's been a challenging

# PSA

## Pilots Prepare For End Game

By Lydia Jakub, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

road, and we are pleased that negotiations appear to be back on track," says Capt. Tom Arline, chairman of the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC). "PSA pilots provide US Airways and its Express passengers with a valuable service. We are seeking a fair contract, one that recognizes our contributions to the operation and enables the



F/O Mark Hinczynski preflights a CRJ.

airline to remain competitive."

In negotiations since June 2009, the pilots initially made steady progress with the company, working through the noneconomic sections of the contract. That progress slowed considerably as the parties began to discuss pay, work rules, and other economic-related sections. The problem was compounded by manage-

ment's unwillingness to meet more than once per month. The pilots' patience began to wear thin in mid-2011, following several months of unproductive talks.

In July 2011, ALPA and the company jointly petitioned the National Mediation Board (NMB) for assistance to jumpstart the process and help the parties reach agreement on a new contract—one that recognizes the value of the PSA pilot group. While the parties filed jointly, the company then canceled three bargaining sessions and refused to meet again until a mediator was available. This caused five months to go by with no negotiations.

Mediated sessions began in October. Although off to a slow start, the pace of negotiations picked up at the end of 2011, and the pilots are cautiously optimistic that the momentum will continue into the new year. The NMB has established a full schedule for talks in the first quarter of the year and an aggressive agenda.

"It's time to get a deal done," Arline says. "The company has reaped the rewards of our hard work for too long. In our next contract, we expect to be compensated fairly for the outstanding professionalism our pilots display every day."

To date, the pilots have reached tentative agreements with the company on 17 sections, including Sections 6 (Moving Expenses), 8 (Deadheading), 9 (Instructors), 10 (Transfer to Non-Flying and Managerial Duty), 11 (Training), 13 (Leaves), 15 (Physical Standards), 17 (Uniforms), 18 (Discipline), 19 (Grievances), 20 (Grievance Review Committee), 21 (System Board of

Adjustment), 22 (Seniority), 23 (Furlough), 24 (Vacancies), 29 (Agency Shop), and 30 (Professional Standards).

Significant progress has also been made on Sections 5 (Expenses), 7 (Vacations), 14 (Sick Leave), 25 (Scheduling), and 26 (General). Only a handful of items remain in each of these sections. Once these issues are resolved, the parties will be down to the substantive economic issues such as compensation, monthly guarantees, retirement, and insurance.

Throughout the negotiations process, the pilots have left no stone unturned in their work to achieve a fair contract and have drawn support from their fellow ALPA brethren. They are actively involved in ALPA's US Airways Express Pilots Alliance (USEPA), which is made up of Air Wisconsin, Mesa, Piedmont, Pinnacle, PSA, and Trans States pilots. USEPA's mission is to enhance safety programs, improve contract standards, and promote job security within the US Airways Express brand.

In 2011, the company recalled all of its furloughed pilots and hired approximately 40 additional pilots. The airline plans to continue hiring in 2012; however, these plans could change depending upon the staffing needs of the operation.

### PSA at a Glance

- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 1988
- **Number of pilots:** Approximately 500
- **Operations:** PSA is a wholly owned subsidiary of US Airways Group, Inc. It operates as US Airways Express and serves 65 airports in the United States with more than 125 departures daily
- **Bases:** Charlotte, N.C.; Dayton, Ohio; Knoxville, Tenn.
- **Headquarters:** Dayton, Ohio
- **Fleet:** 35 CRJ200s, 14 CRJ700s



Although only in the early stages of their Section 6 contract negotiations, Ryan International Airlines pilots are cautiously optimistic. "This latest round of talks has

pilot contract negotiators to take a different approach when balancing member priorities with operational needs, so scheduling will be an important part of contract talks.

military installations all over the world." In addition to U.S. soldiers, Ryan pilots transport British, Canadian, and Polish troops.

The airline's MD-80 crews routinely support the U.S. Department of Justice, transporting prisoners and deportees to locations in South and Central America. The airline also transports college sports teams and booster groups.

Unfortunately, as a result of a dispute with the lessor, one of Ryan's B-767s has been temporarily parked. Consequently, the airline recently announced the furlough of 25 pilots. Expediently recalling these pilots will be another priority for the MEC, one that Ryan pilots hope they can address with a swift resolution to the lease issue, or the acquisition of a second A330 in 2012.

Ryan Aviation Corporation began as a fixed-base operator in 1976, providing fueling and maintenance services in Wichita, Kan. Changing its name to Ryan International Airlines, the organization hired pilots and started transporting freight. By 1984, Ryan began flying passengers on a charter basis. The airline ceased cargo operations in 2004 and moved its headquarters to its current location in Rockford, Ill., in 2006 after it was purchased by the Rubloff Development Group.

# Ryan

## Contract Negotiations Off to a Good Start

By John Perkinson  
Staff Writer

started off on a somewhat more positive note than when we negotiated for the previous agreement," says Capt. Erik Sparks, chairman of the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC). "We hope we can continue to make steady progress at the table."

Even though the parties have only met twice, beginning in September 2011, the two sides have tentatively agreed to 10 of 31 sections.

Ryan is probably best known as a U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) contractor and operates a fleet of five B-767s and four MD-80s. The airline retired the last of its B-757s in 2011 and has just begun the process of adding the A330 to its certificate.

"Ryan has been trying for the last year to acquire a larger class of widebody aircraft to meet the DOD's needs. The Department of Defense has split its widebody requirement into two groups, and our 767s meet the smaller group criteria. To continue to maintain our allotment of DOD flying,

Ryan has to be able to offer service in both sizes of aircraft," says Sparks.

The airline initially considered B-777s and attempted to purchase two from EgyptAir last summer. Unfortunately, with the political turmoil in Egypt during that time, Ryan wasn't able to complete a deal. However, in September, the company opted to lease a brand-new A330-300 from Virgin Atlantic and hopes to acquire another one in the near future.

Regarding Ryan's current flying, Sparks says, "For the Department of Defense, we fly U.S. troops around the world. We frequently transport soldiers to Central Asia to support military operations in Afghanistan and to the Southwest Asian theater to assist with the operations in the Persian Gulf. We also offer limited flights directly into Afghanistan and Iraq, and to

The pilots currently have negotiating sessions scheduled for every month through April 2012.

Collective bargaining remains a top priority for the pilots of this charter-service provider based in Rockford, Ill. Although the current contract officially becomes amendable in March 2012, the Ryan MEC, pursuant to the duration clause of their agreement, began negotiations six months early hoping to achieve their goals sooner. At the bargaining table for the Ryan pilots are Capts. Jeff Hand, Eric John, and Steve Montgomery. With the demands of Ryan's unique business model, pilots typically bid 56-day reserve schedules, as compared to the monthly schedules that most airline pilots fly. This requires



### RYN at a Glance

- Pilots joined ALPA: 1998
- Number of pilots: 217
- Pilot domicile: Rockford, Ill.
- Services: Ryan International Airlines (not to be confused with Ireland-based Ryanair) provides scheduled and charter services for customers around the globe, including substantial flying for the U.S. Department of Defense
- Fleet: 1 A330, 5-767s, 4 MD-80s



For many airlines, the current economic state has forced companies, and their employees, to trim costs and tighten their belts. However, Spirit Airlines is already looking

# Spirit

## By Leaps and Bounds

By Jen Lofquist, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

at belts in a larger size. This year has proven to be one of unprecedented growth at the self-proclaimed “ultra-low-cost carrier.” In fact, of all the airlines in the United States, Spirit is one of the top three fastest growing.

In November 2011, the airline announced plans to open a new domicile in Las Vegas—the first Spirit base

it’s reassuring to be part of an airline that’s growing,” comments Capt. Sean Creed, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. “The new base recognizes how much of our flying is further west and will allow our pilots more options on where to call home when flying the line.”

And it’s not just bases Spirit Airlines is adding. In November 2011, at the Dubai Air Show, the company announced that it had signed a memorandum of understanding to increase its current order of 33 airplanes by 75 A320s. The 33 aircraft already ordered will, by the end of 2015, bring the total number of airliners on the property to 68—nearly doubling the size of the airline.

These new airplanes and new domicile will need new pilots in the cockpits. To crew these airplanes, the company has started to aggressively hire, bringing on more than a dozen pilots each month. Once plagued with furloughs, the pilots are seeing upgrades and new-hire classes.

“As a union, we’re trying to keep up with all the new faces on the property,” continues Creed. “It’s important that the new hires are not only welcomed to Spirit Airlines, but to ALPA as well. We host picnics, talk to them individually, and let each of them know how our union will help protect their career at Spirit.”

While the growth is good news, not all is bright at the airline. In October, the flight attendants voted to authorize a lawful strike should the National Mediation Board release them to do so. One month later, the pilots demonstrated their support by showing up at a flight attendant picket line in front of Spirit’s headquarters—just as

the flight attendants showed up in droves to support the pilots during their strike in 2010.

The pilots, in addition to helping their fellow Spirit employees obtain a new contract, have been busily protecting their own. In the year since the five-day strike that grounded the airline, the contract has been sorely tested by a management consistently reluctant to abide by its terms. With that in mind, Spirit pilot negotiators included an innovative tenet in the agreement—expedited grievances.

The language in the current contract includes an arbitration schedule and an agreed-upon list of mutually acceptable arbitrators, which eliminate many of management’s delay tactics. This has resulted in grievances being settled far more quickly and is an effective deterrent to some of the more egregious violations once commonplace on the property.

“Although it would be nice to think that after years of negotiations, a 30-day cooling-off period, and a strike our pilot group could sit back and relax, this hasn’t been the case,” says Creed. “They say that the price of freedom is eternal vigilance, and the same could be said about the price of our contract. This agreement isn’t worth the paper it’s printed on unless we are determined to protect it against any infraction—and this pilot group is.”



CAPT. ANDY NELSON (SPIRIT)

F/O Paul Hopkins inspects his aircraft before takeoff in Santiago, Dominican Republic.

west of the Mississippi. This reflects the airline’s new focus on domestic routes in the western part of the United States, rather than South and Central America. The base is currently scheduled to open in February 2012—with a full contingent of pilots and flight attendants staffing more than 23 daily flights out of the new hub. Although starting with just 18 crews, the company has told the pilots that it hopes to have as many as 60 crews in the future.

“At a time when most airlines seem to be shrinking,

### SPA at a Glance

- Pilots joined ALPA: 1996
- Number of pilots: 600
- Headquarters: Miramar, Fla.
- Pilot domiciles: Atlantic City, N.J.; Detroit, Mich.; Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; Las Vegas, Nev.
- Fleet: 26 A319s, 7 A320s, 2 A321s



While Sun Country Airlines accomplished two of its major business objectives in 2011, for the airline's 184 pilots their key goal of winning a new contract

# Sun Country

## New Owners, New Challenges

By Rusty Ayers, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

remains frustratingly distant, despite almost two years of negotiations.

With the departures of Northwest Airlines in 2009 and Mesaba just last year, the Minneapolis-based carrier now stands alone as



A Sun Country B-737 at Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport.

Minnesota's last hometown airline. Sun Country made great strides in 2011: it made money, emerged from bankruptcy, and found a new owner. But despite those improvements, labor relations are strained.

Sun Country was originally created by a group of furloughed Braniff Airlines employees who gambled that sun-hungry Midwesterners would support a vacation-charter airline. The airline went out of business after 9/11 but was started up again by some of the original investors, and by 2006 Sun Country

was owned by billionaire Tom Petters.

Just two years later, Sun Country was forced into bankruptcy once again after Petters was caught stealing billions of dollars from investors of his various companies. Employees had to endure 50 percent pay cuts for a short period to keep the airline from going out of business. After Master Executive Council (MEC) involvement, the employees were repaid with interest and the airline began growing.

"We entered negotiations in the spring of 2010, and bargaining was understandably slow because we were still in bankruptcy. We are out of bankruptcy protection now, and our contract needs pay and benefit improvements to bring us to parity with the rest of the industry," says Capt. Dennis Vanatta, the pilots' MEC chairman.

"We were hopeful that talks would speed up when we emerged from bankruptcy last February; but we're still pretty far apart on many things, and the pace of bargaining remains disappointing."

Last May, the airline violated the pilot group's contract by refusing to issue roughly \$600,000 in 2010 pilot profit-sharing checks. With the union's involvement, the profit-sharing was paid, but the pilots felt that it was the latest example of management playing fast and loose with the pilots' compensation.

And management's non-compliance with the current labor agreement seems to be a growing trend at the airline—with the number of open grievances at the highest level in the history of the airline. As a result, the pilots have been forced to begin resorting to the arbitration

process for the first time.

Like many airlines in Section 6, the major sources of disagreement remain pay, retirement, and scheduling. Sun Country crews are very nearly the lowest-paid B-737 pilots in the nation, and are seeking parity with other narrowbody crews flying long haul domestically and to the Caribbean, Mexico, and Europe.

"We started flying to the UK so that we could win ETOPS certification and prove to the military we could reliably fly transatlantic routes, and our pilots have done an outstanding job. Now the airline has joined the Civil Reserve Air Fleet (CRAF) program, and we anticipate much more overseas flying. If we are going to be asked to fly international routes, we feel it's only fair that we have parity with other international carriers," Vanatta explains.

It remains to be seen what 2012 will bring to the negotiating process. The airline's new owners are a Minnesota family whose other businesses are in dairy products and quartz countertops, and who are believed to have little or no experience with the airline industry, or with labor unions and union contracts.

"We have reached out to the Davis family, but they haven't responded. We hope they will realize that bringing the pilots' contract into parity with the rest of the industry is our top goal. We are still hopeful that they're willing to work with us to make that happen without undue distraction or delay so that we can bring our negotiations to a successful conclusion and turn our full attention back to working together to help the airline prosper and grow," Vanatta says.

### SCA at a Glance

- **Founded:** 1982
- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 1996
- **Number of pilots:** 184
- **Pilot base:** Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.
- **Operations:** Based in Mendota Heights, Minn., Sun Country flies scheduled service to 32 destinations, 11 of which are served year-round. The airline also operates charter flights to numerous locations in the continental United States, Hawaii, Alaska, Mexico, the Caribbean, and the UK. The airline is also actively seeking military charter flying and is a new participant in the Department of Defense's Civil Reserve Air Fleet
- **Fleet:** 15 B-737NGs, with more aircraft leased seasonally



After a grueling five-and-a-half years of negotiations, Trans States pilots finally obtained the industry-average contract they so richly deserve.

The pilots were very

# Trans States

## Pilots Conclude Successful Negotiations

By Kimberly Seitz, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

focused on contract negotiations at the beginning of 2011. "We were unwavering and determined to achieve the contract goals we set when negotiations opened in 2006," says Capt. Jason Ruszin, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. "Our fundamentals were established early on in our negotiations and



To prepare for end-stage negotiations, Trans States pilots man the phones during a trial run of the ALPA phone tree to all Trans States pilots.

remained at the forefront as we negotiated in the final hours." Around-the-clock negotiations at the National Mediation Board headquarters in Washington, D.C., on July 6-8 culminated in an agreement the pilot leaders felt confident they could send to the pilots for ratification. "With the resources and staff expertise that ALPA provided us, we were able to achieve our contract goals," Ruszin says.

The tentative agreement included a \$1.5 million signing bonus, significant gains in compensation, cancellation

pay on a leg-by-leg basis, and considerable improvements throughout the contract. The agreement also included a letter of agreement (LOA) with Trans States Holdings, the parent company of Trans States, Compass, and GoJet. This LOA provides Trans States pilots with preferential hiring and the retention of 50 percent of their Trans States' longevity at a sister carrier in the event of furlough from the airline or cessation of operations. In addition, Trans States Holdings will not permit any of its affiliates other than Trans States to operate turboprops with 50 or fewer seats and Embraer turbojets with 50 or fewer seats.

On July 29, 2011, 85 percent of eligible pilots cast their ballots, and 94 percent of those voting approved the new agreement. The contract went into effect August 1, and the signing bonus was paid in November.

Blue skies soon turned grey, however, when management announced a new round of furloughs in November. In preparation for the furloughs, the company and the pilots implemented the measures outlined above in the LOA, which became a very significant job protection/furlough mitigation measure for the pilots.

Both the Compass and GoJet MECs have already agreed to the preferential hiring provisions. The scope language will be further tested in 2012 when 20 more pilots are furloughed to prepare for the scheduled lease returns of seven aircraft by May. "Should these aircraft leases not be renewed," Ruszin explains, "the Trans States fleet will be reduced to 19 airplanes."

In other news on the prop-

erty, the MEC signed a FOQA letter of agreement that provides a high degree of pilot protections and resolves many concerns the MEC had going into FOQA negotiations in 2010. The LOA provides for an ALPA gatekeeper, includes language to suspend the program for violations of the program, controls the identifying data collected, defines the limits on the release of the data, includes pilot discipline protections, and provides company-sponsored compensation for ALPA FOQA monitoring team members. The Trans States and Compass MECs continue to collaborate and strive to develop a joint strategic plan for the future. Additionally, the Trans States MEC and Training Committee are reviewing the company's plan to move to an AQP training curriculum. Both sides expect to begin negotiations on an LOA early this year. "We believe this will be a better and more effective way to conduct training," says Ruszin.

The pilots also continue to participate in the US Airways Express Alliance. "We continue to collaborate in areas of safety, training, and job security," notes Ruszin. "This Alliance has been a useful tool on many fronts. We used information from our Alliance partners to help negotiate our FOQA LOA. We also sent our Negotiating Committee chairman to other Alliance pilot groups to help with their negotiations, and we continue to share our concerns, problems, and news across company lines. Knowing what is going on at other airlines is an essential role of any MEC chairman and greatly enhances decision-making." 

### TSA at a Glance

- Pilots joined ALPA: 1993
- Signed first ALPA contract: 1994
- Number of pilots: 288 active
- Operations: More than 150 daily flights to 39 cities, serving more than 2.1 million passengers annually while flying as United Express and US Airways Express
- Pilot domiciles: St. Louis, Mo.; Washington Dulles, Va.
- Headquarters: St. Louis, Mo.
- Fleet: 26 EMB-145s



The pilots of United Airlines have been battling United's management over the past several months on two fronts—inadequate training associated with attaining a

at United Airlines, many of whom came over from Continental and emanated from People Express, fail to recognize and comprehend the contributions United pilots have made to the training and safety culture at the airline over the years.

continue to work with their Continental brethren trying to secure a JCBA with the company. Talks have been ongoing since August 2010, with little progress made in any key issue areas.

For nearly eight years, the United pilots have been flying under a contract hammered out during the airline's bankruptcy, and their patience is growing thin regarding management's delays to negotiate a contract that acknowledges their contributions. Negotiations, which are under the supervision of the National Mediation Board, are at best moving at a snail's pace with more than nine months spent gridlocked on work rules with major sections such as retirement, benefits, compensation, and scope only being minimally discussed.

Capt. Jay Heppner, who began his new duties as the

# United

## Pilots Battling To Save Safety Culture; Working Toward JCBA

By C. David Kelly, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

single operating certificate (SOC) and negotiating an industry-leading joint collective bargaining agreement (JCBA).

On the safety and training front, the pilots continue to stand up and voice strong concern to United's management and to the highest levels of the FAA regarding the company's inadequate training associated with United's SOC. ALPA was founded on safety 80 years ago. Today, safety remains its bedrock.

"Securing a joint collective bargaining agreement with the company is a major priority for this pilot group," says Capt. Wendy Morse, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. "But equally important is preserving the industry-leading safety culture, which is sacred to each and every United pilot, and requires commensurate training. United pilots earned a reputation worldwide as being among the safest in the airline industry. And that reputation wasn't earned by chance. Many of the procedures and practices airlines and the FAA adopted were the result of the work, dedication, and professionalism of United and other airline pilots throughout the industry."

Morse and the United MEC are concerned that the new management executives

"Through the years, ALPA has been an essential part of the safety and training culture at United Airlines, integrally working alongside management to develop and implement safety rules and procedures," notes Morse, whose term as chairman of the United MEC ended on Dec. 31, 2011. "Since the announced merger with Continental Airlines and the installation of new management, ALPA's voice in the training and safety arena has not been recognized as in the past and over our long history,

at the risk of

reducing the safety level for which United Airlines is known. It is not that melding two safety cultures is the problem, but training is crucial in that effort."

The United pilots, upon the request of members of Congress, on November 10, issued a white paper on the inadequate training and compromised safety procedures by United Airlines within the process of its merger with Continental.

"This is a battle that we have an obligation to engage in. It's a fight United pilots will always join when we see United management compromising safety for expediency," Morse says.

On the negotiating front, the United pilots also



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pilots' MEC chairman on Jan. 1, 2012, is well acquainted with the JCBA issues, having served as the MEC's Negotiating Committee chairman the past two years. His focus is on securing a JCBA that will usher in a new day for pilots at United.

"The goals of a collective bargaining agreement are in place, and the United and Continental MECs have unanimously validated those goals and objectives," says Heppner. "It is our intent to secure a contract for our pilots, a contract that will be viewed as the best in the industry. Our pilots have earned it, and they should not be expected to settle for anything less."

A United B-747 in the new corporate livery.

### UAL at a Glance

- **Pilots joined ALPA:** 1932
- **Number of pilots:** Approximately 7,500 (1,437 on furlough)
- **Headquarters:** Chicago, Ill.
- **Pilot domiciles:** Washington Dulles, Va.; Chicago, Ill.; Seattle, Wash.; Denver, Co.; San Francisco, Calif.; New York (JFK); Los Angeles, Calif.
- **Fleet:** A319s, A320s, B-757s, B-767s, B-777s, B-747s

With no time to rest on their laurels, the Wasaya pilots are moving toward a new round of negotiations and their next collective bargaining agree-

## Wasaya

### Starting Anew

By Jen Lofquist, ALPA Senior Communications Specialist

ment. Relatively new to the collective bargaining process, the pilots relied on ALPA's resources and expertise to bring the first-ever pilot contract to the property in 2010. As the new round of negotiations goes forward, the pilot group is again using the resources available in ALPA's toolbox to obtain a fair agreement.

"Working under a contract has been a learning experi-

process begins again, as the current contract ends in October 2012. "We see this initial agreement as a starting point to better and more fruitful negotiations in the future," continues Sexton. "Now that we have some of the basics in writing, we've built the scaffolding. Now it's time for us to start putting up the walls and really making this contract something that we, both management and the pilots, can live in."

As the next negotiation session moves forward, one thing is significantly different from the prior negotiations: There will be no discussion of a work stoppage. In 2010, after much discussion and number crunching, both sides agreed that Wasaya, under Canadian law, qualified as an essential service. Unlike many airlines with ALPA-represented pilots that cater to business and vacation travel, Wasaya's main focus is the 25 First Nations of Ontario and Manitoba—the aboriginal communities native to Canada.

These remote communities are often inaccessible except by air. Wasaya pilots often land in conditions and on runways that would test any pilot's nerves. The runways are often snow-covered and made of gravel. These communities rely solely on Wasaya and its pilots to bring in not just passengers, but also food, fuel, and medicine. Any stoppage or delay in the vital services that these pilots provide could be devastating to the members of these First Nations.

According to the Canadian Labour Code, if a disruption of service could significantly threaten the well-being of a population, the parties involved are not allowed to

disrupt services. Just as the Wasaya pilots can never enact a strike on their employer, Wasaya management can never lock out the pilots. By signing the Essential Services Agreement in early 2009, the pilots and management took this option off the table.

"Although we don't like to see any weapon taken out of our arsenal," comments Sexton, "I think every pilot knows how important the flying we do is to the communities we serve. Knowing that we are vital to these communities makes us more proud of the work we do and more committed to getting a contract that reflects our commitment to this company and to the people who rely on us."

In the end, it took outside forces to get management and pilots to hammer out a first agreement. In December 2009, both sides agreed to seek the help of a government-appointed conciliator. By the end of August 2010, both parties finally agreed upon a contract. For the next month, pilot leaders discussed the agreement with the pilots, who then ratified the agreement in September. The contract took effect in October. Now that hard work is beginning again, as the pilots are looking to their next contract to fulfill some of the potential left untapped in their first agreement.

"As we near the end of our first agreement, we are all looking toward our second," continues Sexton. "Management and our pilot group have the same goal—to build a successful and profitable airline that serves our communities. We have proven that we can work together. Now it's time for us to prove it again." 



One of Wasaya's Beech 1900Ds.

ence for all of us," says Capt. Kate Sexton, acting Master Executive Council (MEC) chair. "When we first joined ALPA, we had an entire wish list of things we wanted in our contract—much more than just pay. Many of our wants came down to quality-of-life improvements. Things that most pilots might take for granted, these were firsts for us."

Among these priorities were a sick bank and a seniority list. Both systems were completely new to the pilot group—and new to the management that now had to abide by the contract in place.

And now the negotiations

#### WSG at a Glance

- Pilots joined ALPA: 2008
- Number of pilots: 83
- Hub: Thunder Bay, Ont.
- Domiciles: Thunder Bay, Ont.; Pickle Lake, Ont.; Sioux Lookout, Ont.; Timmins, Ont.; Red Lake, Ont.
- Fleet: 27 aircraft, including Beech 1900Ds, Cessna C-208Bs, Hawker Siddeley HS748s, Pilatus PC-12s, Dash 8s