The background of the page is a photograph of a United B757-200 aircraft at San Francisco International Airport during sunset. The aircraft is silhouetted against the bright orange and yellow sky. The tail fin is prominent, featuring the United logo, a globe with blue and gold stripes. The right side of the page has a vertical teal gradient overlay.

THE PILOTS OF ALPA 2014

Like you, your fellow members of the Air Line Pilots Association, International have aimed aluminum at a runway thousands of times, watched the rabbit disappear into the fog, kicked out the crab in the touchdown zone, and done the thousand little and big things you do to convert kerosene into passenger seat miles or cargo ton miles.

They've also elected their local executive council and master executive council reps, voted tentative agreements up or down, and used ALPA's resources, credibility, and clout to make the airline industry more competitive, more secure, and ever safer. Many of their issues are your issues, too, so please take the time to read the profiles included within the next 32 pages, including your own.

ATN at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 2009

Pilots: 1,000+

Pilot domiciles: Atlanta, Ga., and Orlando, Fla.

Headquarters: Dallas, Tex.

Operations/services: AirTran Airways, a wholly owned subsidiary of Southwest Airlines Co., offers coast-to-coast and near-international service with around 340 flights a day to 35+ domestic and 7 near-international destinations.

Fleet: 72 B-717s and 33 B-737s

AirTran

Pilots Navigate a Turbulent Transition

By **Toni C. Vacinek**
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

During 2013, the pilots of AirTran Airways became immersed in the transition to Southwest Airlines. More than 500 pilots completed training to become Southwest line pilots. As 2014 begins, more than 1,000 pilots remain at AirTran.

Last year was full of multiple challenges relating to the Southwest acquisition. The company's decision to sublease AirTran's B-717 fleet to Delta left the pilot group disenchanted and angered. An arbitration process dealing with the sublease and its effect on the ratified integration agreement began in September 2012 and came to a close in November 2013. At stake were captain positions, compensation, and base preference.

In May, an arbitrator determined that the complaint was within the jurisdiction of the dispute resolution process. The second arbitration brought a disappointing conclusion to the process when the

arbitrator rejected AirTran pilot claims and declined to remedy the problems produced by the B-717 sublease.

Throughout both the arbitrations and the waiting period in between, the AirTran pilot group maintained consummate professionalism and unity. Led by

the AirTran Master Executive Council (MEC), the pilots have overcome numerous ordeals that can accompany an acquisition of this magnitude.

The Milwaukee (MKE) B-737 domicile was closed in March, and those MKE-based pilots were sent to their awarded positions, some becoming Southwest first officers and some remaining at AirTran to then fly the B-717. The Orlando (MCO) base for AirTran B-737s was closed by September, and those pilots were sent across the partition to Southwest first officer positions despite several senior pilots holding B-717 captain awards. These and other unexpected changes from the ratified agreement have caused disruption and financial harm to AirTran pilots.

As the transition continues and the number of pilots working under the AirTran collective bargaining agreement declines, the MEC continues the business of representing its pilots. Many officers, committee chairmen, and volunteers have transitioned to Southwest, and other AirTran pilots have stepped in to do the work. With more than 600 pilots expected to remain at AirTran throughout the summer, the MEC's efforts to represent their interests will continue.

AirTran pilots saw the Southwest Atlanta pilot domicile open on Aug. 1, 2013. This bittersweet event brought back several former AirTran pilots who had already transitioned to Southwest and demonstrated a more tangible blending of the operations. AirTran routes will continue to transfer to

Southwest operations during 2014 with the final AirTran flying being completed around year's end.

"This coming year will bring the integration of the majority of the premerger AirTran pilot group," says Capt. Mark Hatten, the pilots' MEC chairman. "Throughout the entire process, the constant has been the professionalism of the AirTran pilots. With all that this pilot group has weathered, it continues to rally and support each other in every situation, making the needs of fellow pilots the overall priority."

The MEC's primary focus this year will be the single representation of both the AirTran and Southwest pilot groups as operations will be combined by the end of the year. And while ALPA's leaders and staff remain committed to making available all union resources to the AirTran pilots, preparations for change in union representation must move forward. The MEC leaders recognize the value in a single, unified pilot group at Southwest and plan to continue working with the Southwest Airlines Pilots' Association (SWAPA) to blueprint the process and establish a suitable time line.

In 2014, the remaining AirTran pilots will take part in the final integration of the two airlines and the eventual single-carrier status. This group of pilots will conclude a proud chapter of airline history and begin the next chapter as Southwest Airlines pilots. The final and lasting legacy of AirTran pilots will be one of excellence, dignity, and regard for their fellow pilots. 



AirTran Local Executive Council 71 chairman Capt. Jim Gallagher and (former) AirTran F/O Christi Taylor in the cockpit of their B-717. Taylor transitioned to Southwest Airlines in February 2013.

Air Transat

Navigating Troubled Waters

By Jen Lofquist
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

As 2013 comes to a close, the flightcrew members of Air Transat continue to navigate a number of challenges, including working with a new Master Executive Council (MEC), dealing with unhelpful government actions, and transitioning to a new in-house fleet.

In May 2013, the MEC experienced its own challenges as new leaders were put into place due to a sudden turnover. Working with ALPA national officers and legal counsel, temporary leaders were quickly selected; a temporary MEC chairman was named with the sole duty of holding elections as quickly as possible for MEC chairman, vice chairman, and secretary-treasurer. These officers will hold their positions until February 2014.

“Without effective leadership, no group functions properly,” comments Capt. Patrice Roy, the pilots’ temporary MEC chairman. “We were able to lean on ALPA national to help us find a way for our pilots to reconnect with the leadership, and we needed to rebuild trust within the organization.”

In the midst of the change in MEC leaders, Transat A.T. (the parent company) announced in May 2013 that when its charter contract with CanJet expires in May 2014, it will not be renewed, and Air Transat’s fleet will be brought in-house. The pilots were pleased as they had been eager to operate all Air Transat flying since negotiating the charter contract in 2010.

“The fleet [letter of understanding (LOU)] signed in 2010 was very much the product of the time. The LOU could not ensure the sustainability of Air Transat and our jobs,” says Roy. “We were inventing a unique operating model as we went along. We ended up with a multitype internal ‘accordion’ fleet, with several of our pilots having dual qualifications.”

The old LOU was based on a model of reciprocity and on traditional staffing rules. These had to be completely revised to work with the new fleet arrangement. The new LOU ratified in 2013 delivers significant benefits—pilots with dual qualifications will continue to earn their applicable widebody salary when flying B-737s, pilots flying B-737s will retain their permanent bases even during seasonal operations, and pilots will enjoy better salary protection and recognition of service in a higher classification. However, most importantly, the pilot group will have a stable level of employment—crewmembers will be able to shift from one aircraft type to another during seasonal highs and lows in traffic. In addition, the profit sharing the group accepted in 2012 in lieu of salary increases has paid off, with each pilot receiving a 7 percent bonus in 2013.

The first B-737 will be introduced in February 2014, to be followed by four more permanent B-737s by May 1.

An additional challenge stems from a situation created not at the airport, but in the halls of Parliament. The

Temporary Foreign Worker Program has long threatened the airline piloting profession in Canada—and Air Transat in particular, because of its holiday travel focus—by taking jobs away from furloughed Canadian pilots. Some of the problems were based in the government’s lack of understanding of the airline piloting



Capt. Patrice Roy, the temporary MEC chair, in the cockpit.

profession. For instance, there seemed to be confusion between a type rating and a pilot certificate. Also, although Citizen Immigration Canada called for reciprocity between the number of foreign workers coming into Canada and the number of Canadian pilots having foreign opportunities, no clear standard existed as to what that reciprocity meant in practice. ALPA’s Canada Board and Government Affairs Department lobbied in Ottawa, Ont., for stronger language and a distinct definition of reciprocity.

“Although this past year has been challenging,” says Roy, “we have moved forward by unifying not only within our group, but with the other pilot groups in Canada. It’s only by cooperation that Air Transat pilots can work through these difficult times and come out stronger.”

TSC at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1999

Number of pilots: 425

Headquarters: Pierre E. Trudeau International Airport, Montreal, P.Q.

Pilot bases: Montreal, P.Q.; Toronto, Ont.; and Vancouver, B.C.

Fleet: 9 A310s and 12 A330s, plus 5 B-737s arriving in 2014

Air Transport Int'l

The Challenging Effects of Transition and Change

By Tawnya Burket
ALPA Communications
Specialist

Air Transport International (ATI) crewmembers are no strangers to transition and change, especially during 2013 when the group faced the challenges that come with a merger. Operationally, the merger with Capital Cargo International Airlines (CCIA) became final on March 8 when ATI received its single operating certificate and the final CCIA flight took off. Only days before, the joint collective bargaining agreement (JCBA) and integrated seniority list

had taken effect. By April, the 11-month merger process concluded when the ATI and CCIA crewmembers took steps to combine their single-council Master Executive Councils (MECs) by holding an election for status representatives and then MEC officers to be chosen among the three elected reps to represent the entire pilot group. That MEC dealt with many hurdles in its first year of office. "We are working to find balance as we continue to navigate through all of the changes related to the merger," says Capt. Tom Rogers, the ATI MEC chairman. The MEC lost its secretary-treasurer and professional flight engineer

(PFE) representative, Scott Olson, when he was furloughed last fall before completing his full term of office through February 2015.

During the summer and fall of 2013, the Joint Implementation Review Committee (JIRC) met with management to ensure that implementation of the JCBA was under way. The committee resolved several issues that arose as the JCBA was being implemented, including items related to junior assignments, benefits, retirement, the sick-bank conversion process, and uniforms for former Capital employees. The JIRC had authority to deal with unexpected issues for the first six months following the March 6, 2013, JCBA effective date. Once the committee was dissolved in September, the normal contract enforcement and grievance proceedings became effective.

Other challenges that arose during the merger and implementation of the new contract dealt with scheduling and training discrepancies. Transition training continues as DC-8 combis are being retired, moving the pilots into Boeing airplanes, which unfortunately means that fellow crewmembers had to say good-bye to the professional flight engineers. The flight engineer craft is being phased out at ATI and many other cargo airlines; all of the 78 PFEs once on the property were furloughed as of Jan. 1, 2014.

B-757 pilots from the domestic operation are being trained in international flight operations and differences training for the B-767.

Proving runs were completed in summer through fall for the B-757 combi. Tabletop exercises for the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceans ETOPs validation runs were also successful, putting the B-757 on the DC-8 combi runs. Since the four-engine DC-8 is being replaced by a more fuel-efficient twin-engine aircraft to compete in the global marketplace, a series of validation tests were necessary to demonstrate that ATI can safely operate twin-engine airplanes in extended overwater operations.

The airline and the FAA are currently in the final stages of approving an Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP). "This program, designed to enhance safety at ATI by providing a way for management, the pilots, and the FAA to detect and rectify safety problems is key," notes Rogers. "We have been trying for years to get ASAP on the property and are happy to see it's coming to fruition." Once approved, the MEC will be educating its members about the program.

The current ATI collective bargaining agreement becomes amendable in May 2014. The MEC is planning for the future by preparing a 2014 strategic plan and will consider the best path to seize opportunities that will most benefit the pilot group. "I look forward to building more unity within the group, creating a stronger committee structure that allows us to help and work with one another more effectively, and taking full advantage of the arsenal of ALPA resources available to us," says Rogers. 🌐

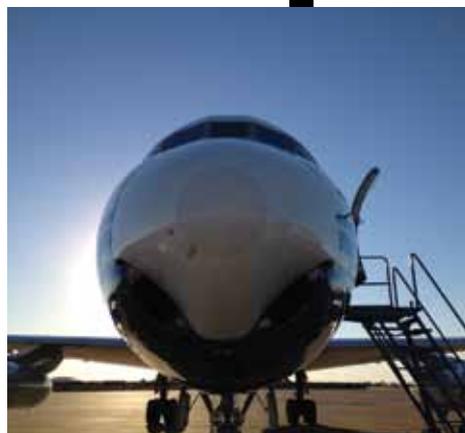


PHOTO BY CAPT. TOM ROGERS

The DC-8 bids farewell to Air Transport International crews as it retires this year.

ATI at a Glance

Crewmembers joined ALPA: November 2009

Number of crewmembers: 345 with 159 on furlough

Operations: Combi passenger, military, and cargo operations around the world

Base: Home-based

Corporate headquarters: Wilmington, Ohio

Fleet: Currently operates seven B-767 freighters and seven B-757s, four of which are freighters and three are combis (fourth combi in the certification process)

Air Wisconsin

Exemplary Pilots, Exemplary Volunteers

By Lydia Jakub
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

Air Wisconsin pilots have been working for more than three years to secure a new, improved contract. Their Negotiating Committee is at the tip of the spear, working tirelessly for an agreement that recognizes the pilots' contributions to the airline. The process is being overseen by the National Mediation Board, following the company's request for assistance in 2013.

"Through mediation, we hope to get negotiations back on track," says Capt. Richard Swindell, chairman of the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC). "We have a vested interest in the continued success of our airline and demand more out of our contract, our careers, and our management team."

At Air Wisconsin, an airline where one in eight pilots is a union volunteer, there are 22 standing committees that encompass a broad range of pilot services and issues that the pilots face daily.

The MEC Legislative Affairs Committee advocated on Capitol Hill to level the playing field for the U.S. airline industry. Volunteers were also in crew rooms, encouraging pilots to support ALPA's Political Action Committee (PAC). Along with 100 percent MEC participation, they quadrupled Air Wisconsin pilot participation in the PAC.

The MEC Scheduling Committee worked to separate the new flight-time/duty-time rules into an easy-to-digest format so that pilots could understand them better and remain

in compliance. The committee also added a dedicated reserve resource coordinator to assist reserve pilots with contractual and regulatory issues unique to them.

Linked in many ways to Part 117, the MEC Central Air Safety Committee has been involved in expanding the protocols and procedures of its fatigue-related safety programs. It also tracks and addresses safety issues, and provides continuing support through the ASAP and FOQA Committees.

Having greatly assisted with the recent implementation of AQP, the MEC Testing and Training Committee has been preparing, alongside the MEC Membership Committee, for the anticipated uptick in pilot hiring in 2014 to replace pilots leaving for a career elsewhere.

The Critical Incident Response Program mobilized and worked closely with the MEC and management to support the pilot group after the tragic loss of an Air Wisconsin pilot in 2013.

The MEC Hotel Committee has worked diligently over the last two years to significantly improve hotel standards and filmed a bedbug room inspection video to help keep pilots safe and healthy.

As speculation of continued consolidation within the regional airline industry continues, the MEC Merger Committee is monitoring the industry, maintaining relationships with other pilot groups, and preparing for every possibility.

Also in existence are the MEC committees commonly referred to as the "silent services," as they do the major-ity of their work behind the

scenes to assist pilots with personal as well as professional issues. These include the Aeromedical, Pilot Assistance, Professional Standards, and Veterans Affairs Committees.



MEC and ALPA staff gather at Fort Benjamin Harrison, a former U.S. Army post in Indianapolis, Ind.

Out in front protecting pilots' rights is the MEC Grievance Committee. In 2013, the pilots augmented their existing grievance process with an alternate dispute resolution process, which uses both expedited arbitration and mediation-arbitration. This change has helped to streamline the grievance process and address issues more quickly and efficiently.

The MEC Communications Committee is the cornerstone of solidarity, using a robust multimodal platform to ensure that the Air Wisconsin pilots are informed. In 2013, "high tech" was paired with "high touch" when the MEC Strategic Planning Committee, supported by the MEC Pilot-to-Pilot Committee, met with every active line pilot by visiting recurrent ground schools and hosting unity building events around the system.

"Serving our pilots is our No. 1 priority," concludes Swindell. "We continually seek innovative solutions and are prepared to address any challenge that may be ahead." 🌐

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 departures per day 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, N.Y.; Norfolk, Va.; Philadelphia, Pa.; and Washington, D.C.

Fleet: 71 Canadair 50-seat regional jets (CRJ200s)

ALA at a Glance

Number of pilots: 1,490

Operations: 95 destinations in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico with 800 daily departures, including 40 markets flown by Horizon Air, which provides feed traffic to Alaska Airlines under a capacity-purchase agreement. In 2013, Alaska Airlines added four new destination cities: Kansas City, Mo., and Salt Lake City, Utah, which are served by Alaska Airlines, and Colorado Springs, Colo., and Omaha, Neb., which are operated exclusively by a capacity-purchase agreement with SkyWest Airlines

Fleet: 131 Boeing 737s, including 24 -400s, 17 -700s, 61 -800s, 12 -900s, 11 -900ERs, 5 -400Cs, and 1 -400 freighter



Capt. Dan Hoffman and F/O Craig Davidson receive a tour of the Children's Therapy Center (CTC), a nonprofit organization in Burien, Wash., that provides therapy services for children from birth to age 18. Hoffman and Davidson are board members for the Alaska Airlines Pilots Charitable Fund, which made a grant that purchased several pieces of therapy equipment for the CTC.

Alaska

Collaborative Approach Benefits Pilots, Company

By Jenn Sutton
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

On May 9, 2013, the Alaska Airlines pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) Negotiating Committee reached an agreement in concept for a new contract—just a little more than a month past the April 1 contract amendable date. And in July, the pilots ratified that agreement, putting in place a new five-year contract that includes improvements in pay, greater ability for the pilots to adjust their schedules, and enhanced job security while preserving benefits.

Negotiations began in summer 2012, but the decision to pursue an agreement

that met the pilots' requirements by the amendable date came about in 2011, when—with the assistance of ALPA staff—the MEC developed its strategic plan that set goals and direction for both

negotiations and the future beyond that.

"That we reached an agreement so close to our amendable date that our pilots ratified is the result of the hard work of both our Negotiating Committee and management's negotiating team. Both parties took a collaborative approach to these negotiations, which benefited the pilots and our company," says Capt. Chris Notaro, the pilots' MEC chairman. "Our pilots saw improvements

without a lengthy delay, including pay increases that were effective on the amendable date. Management benefited by avoiding a period of labor uncertainty."

Since contract ratification, the MEC and management have continued their cooperative approach to solving problems. The MEC's Negotiating and Scheduling Committees have worked with management to integrate FAR Part 117 changes into the contract. The new agreement also contains commitments to engage in post-ratification discussions to modernize the section related to flight data recorders and to create a joint working group that will recommend whether scheduling flexibility can be enhanced through new technology. Both of these efforts likely will begin this year, after the new flight-time/duty-time rules are implemented.

The MEC's Scheduling Committee is also working regularly with Alaska's Crew Scheduling Department to monitor how the provisions of the contract are being applied, and is engaging with the company to find ways to continue to improve a pilot's ability to adjust his or her schedule while meeting the company's operational needs.

"If we find areas where improvements can be made without either side being harmed, it doesn't make sense to wait until the next time we open the entire contract to make those changes," says F/O Sean Hansen, the pilots' Negotiating Committee chairman. "We began incorporating these types of memorandums of

understanding and letters of agreement during Contract 2009, and this is something we are continuing during Contract 2013."

This approach resulted in additional improvements in November. The Scheduling Management Group—a pilot-management working group that reviews and works to resolve issues related to scheduling—and the pilots' Grievance Committee worked with management to reach precedent-setting grievance settlements and to clarify contract language. To ensure that pilots have access to those agreements, the MEC incorporated them into an electronic collective bargaining agreement, which is available on both the MEC website and in a tablet-friendly format.

This cooperative approach also prompted the MEC to invite Alaska's executive leaders to address the MEC during the MEC's quarterly meetings. Management attended MEC meetings in August and October to discuss Alaska's direction, challenges, and the company's business plans.

"These discussions, which are covered by nondisclosure agreements, and the candid dialogue that follows, allow the MEC to better plan for the future and improves its ability to more effectively address pilot issues," Notaro says.

The MEC is starting off 2014 by meeting in January, during which time it will review and update its strategic plan with the continuing goal of improving and protecting the lives and working conditions of Alaska Airlines' pilots. 

American Eagle

Pilots in Holding Pattern with Recent AMR Merger

By John Perkinson
Staff Writer

American Eagle pilots are waiting and watching. In negotiating a progressive bankruptcy restructuring labor agreement during 2012, Eagle cockpit crewmembers were compelled to anticipate how they could be affected by the estimated \$17.2 billion merger that would take place a year later between their parent company (the AMR Corp.) and US Airways.

"The hard part was not having a clear vision, fleet plan, or even a business plan to work with," says Capt. Bill Sprague, the American Eagle pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. "Regardless of what happens as this deal unfolds, we are committed to working toward a stable and successful future for our members."

And on Nov. 12, 2013, the U.S. Department of Justice dropped its antitrust lawsuit, allowing the merger to take place on December 9. Subsequently, AMR exited from two years of Chapter 11 bankruptcy, and the newly combined organization became the American Airlines Group, Inc. As part of the merger plan, the group's two mainline subsidiaries, American Airlines and US Airways, will be combined to create the world's largest airline.

With all of this recent activity, the Eagle pilots have also welcomed a new president at their airline, Pedro Fabregas, Eagle's former senior vice president of customer services. So far, the MEC relationship with the Fabregas

management team has been professional and amicable, as both have a vested interest in the future of their airline as part of the new organization. Unfortunately, that rapport has not trickled down to the front lines where contract compliance continues to be a concern.

Both the pilots and management recognize that they face an uncertain future, and the two sides have met to discuss how they can enhance Eagle's role within the new parent company. With the combination of American and US Airways, Eagle will be one of four wholly owned subsidiaries, and the MEC remains in contact with pilots from the other airlines.

And because of this uncertain future, no new airplanes are on order at Eagle, and plans to park older airplanes have been delayed.

In the interim, American Eagle has not maintained adequate pilot staffing, compelling the airline to stretch its current resources. Retirement and attrition are exacerbating the situation, and the airline recently made an arrangement with Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University to establish a Pilot Pipeline Program to tap into a new source for airline-qualified pilots.

The pipeline program is particularly timely as the Eagle pilots' flow-through agreement with American Airlines has been reactivated. A minimum of 20 Eagle pilots (50 percent of each class) is expected to flow up to American each month during 2014, based on seniority. These crewmembers are not required to interview for their

new positions, but each faces a probationary period. "We're about to see a tremendous amount of movement at Eagle," says Sprague.



PHOTO BY FO ANDI LUSHKA (AMERICAN EAGLE)

An American Eagle airplane being de-iced at Chicago O'Hare International Airport.

Also on the Eagle pilot horizon is a preferential bidding system (PBS). The pilots agreed to a letter of intent to negotiate a PBS as part of the bankruptcy agreement of 2012. PBS negotiations took place during 2013, resulting in a recent letter of agreement (LOA) explaining exactly how PBS would be administered. However, the LOA has yet to be ratified, and pilots have expressed concern about whether management will abide by the terms.

Eagle pilots were deeply disappointed by the base closures in Los Angeles, Calif., in December 2012 and San Juan, Puerto Rico, in March 2013. However, the pilots remain cautiously optimistic that with their new parent organization and changes in their airline leadership new opportunities will emerge to develop their route structure and grow their airline. 

EGL at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1995 (although Simmons had been an ALPA member since 1986, after the National Mediation Board's 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: 2,905

Headquarters: Fort Worth, Tex.

Operations: American Eagle operates more than 1,700 daily flights to more than 150 cities throughout the United States, Canada, the Bahamas, the Caribbean, and Mexico

Pilot domiciles: Chicago, Ill.; Dallas/Fort Worth, Tex.; Miami, Fla.; and New York, N.Y.

Fleet: 47 CRJ700s, 181 ERJ 145s, and 15 ERJ 170s

Atlantic Southeast

Merging into a New Future

By Jen Lofquist
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

As this issue goes to press, the Atlantic Southeast Airlines pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) and the Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC) are traveling with the ExpressJet MEC, answering all the questions pilots have about an agreement that was more than three years in the making.

The group is conducting an educational tour, to inform pilots about the long-sought tentative agreement (TA). Voting opened on December 17 and closes on Jan. 14, 2014. This TA, although in many respects industry-leading, contains concessions that management required to achieve lower block-hour costs. Even though capacity-purchase agreements (CPAs) once contained substantial profit margins, the regional airline industry is facing challenging times and CPAs are often awarded to the lowest bidder. Regional airlines are struggling to make more with less and asking for concessions across the industry.

"Merging two airlines is never simple or easy. This merger has proven that," says Capt. David Nieuwenhuis, the Atlantic Southeast MEC chairman. "When we started, I think both groups expected a much smoother route. We had a process agreement that almost took for granted that merging the groups would be expedited. As time went on, we realized it was more complicated than just taking the best of both contracts."

As negotiations continued,

the regional airline industry changed. As the groups moved into their third year, some groups within the industry had signed concessionary agreements while others were facing difficult negotiations. The mainline industry was also changing due to the United/Continental merger, the American Airlines bankruptcy, and the proposed American/US Airways merger. With fewer opportunities to differentiate their products and fewer potential mainline clients, the regional industry suffered.

This past summer, management met with the JNC requesting concessions, something management had not addressed prior to the meeting. The reasoning behind management's request was simple: Atlantic Southeast and ExpressJet are owned by SkyWest, Inc., which also owns SkyWest Airlines. ExpressJet and SkyWest, Inc. had historically shown a profit. But with the increasingly competitive environment and slim margins, ExpressJet was showing losses. In fact, the airline was projected to lose millions of dollars in 2013.

The situation was made more difficult as SkyWest, Inc. continues to make a profit, due in large part to SkyWest Airlines, a separate entity. Management has consistently argued that it wants two competitive airlines, the newly merged ExpressJet and SkyWest. However, ExpressJet's block-hour costs are higher than those of SkyWest Airlines and those of many other regional airlines. Therefore, management wanted those two groups brought more in line with the

rest of the industry.

"There is never a good time to hear the word 'concessions.' However, when you're working day in and day out to finalize a merger, it's perhaps the worst," acknowledges Nieuwenhuis. "It completely reframed months, even years, of hard work, long hours, and hundreds of proposals passed back and forth across the table."

Faced by the economic state of the industry, the demands from management, and ExpressJet's own balance sheet, the Atlantic Southeast MEC agreed to authorize its negotiators, accompanied by the ExpressJet MEC, to begin concessionary bargaining. In just a few months, the JNC reached a TA, which was released to the pilots in late November 2013.

The MECs and JNC immediately began planning road shows in 10 cities in less than 16 days. The communications plan also includes a public website, e-mail messages, all-pilot calls, and crew room visits. The MECs and JNC are faced with the unenviable position of presenting a concessionary TA to pilots who just six months ago were expecting gains.

"I expect the Atlantic Southeast pilots will do what I will do," says Nieuwenhuis. "I'm going to read every page of the agreement, ask every question I can think of, and take a good look at the industry and where I think it will be in the next few years. After that, I'm going to drive home, consider my family, my life, and the career I am dedicated to. Then I will vote the way that I think provides the best for all of those." 

ASA at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1987

First ALPA contract: 1989

Number of pilots: 1,752

Headquarters: Atlanta, Ga.

Pilot bases: Dulles, Va.; Atlanta, Ga.; Dallas, Tex.; and Detroit, Mich.

Fleet: 112 CRJ200s, 46 CRJ700s, and 10 CRJ900s



F/O Wesley Blankenship checks the departure boards at Hartsfield – Jackson Atlanta International Airport.

Bearskin

Steady On

By Jen Lofquist
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

For 50 years, Bearskin Airlines has provided exceptional accessibility to Ontario and Manitoba by flying to 18 destinations as far north as Lynn Lake, Man., and as far south as Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont. From small towns to large cities, Bearskin provides both charter and scheduled flights with more than 100 departures each day.

"Bearskin is something special," says Capt. Dan Parnham, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. "We aren't flashy, we don't have large, modern aircraft, and we don't fly to the most glamorous locations. What we have is a family of tight-knit employees and management working together to provide the best regional service possible in a competitive industry."

Last year, the pilots finalized a new four-year collective bargaining agreement with management. The agreement was made possible through interest-based negotiations, in which both sides look at the issues together and come up with solutions that benefit both the employees and the company's business plan.

"We put a lot of effort into maintaining an open relationship with management and recognize that our company and employees stand to make far better gains by being allies," continues Parnham. "We know not every pilot group or management can function this way, so we value the strength it gives our pilot group and our airline."

This give-and-take approach

to labour relations resulted in an agreement published at the end of 2012 that reduced scheduling inefficiencies and increased flexibility for the company. The company responded by providing better pay and work rules for the pilots. The agreement was reached without any threat from either side of a work stoppage or labour action.

"It's about being on the same team," comments Parnham. "We're thankful our management has placed value in retaining pilots. The pay and working conditions achieved in contract No. 5 have already proven to be what was needed to retain experienced pilots at a time when the industry predicts a pilot shortage. When management asks for something, such as scheduling flexibility, we know they don't just want to get something without giving. They work as hard as we do to make our labour-management relationship successful."

This relationship has also saved the company and pilot group a tremendous amount of manpower and money. For more than eight years, the pilot group has not filed a single grievance or held an arbitration.

On Nov. 10, 2013, the Bearskin family was tested by tragedy. As Flight 311 approached Red Lake, Ont., the airplane crashed on short final. Five of the seven people aboard, including Capt. Peter Traczuk and F/O Aniruddh Sawant, died.

Deadheading Bearskin F/O Keith Hoffman survived and was able to pull himself from the wreckage. Without considering his own safety, Hoffman

entered the burning aircraft to save the only other surviving passenger. Hoffman is considered a hero by all of those who know him, including the off-duty Bearskin passenger service agent he saved.



Within 30 minutes of the accident, ALPA resources were mobilized, and many CIRP volunteers were immediately dispatched to critical areas of need. During the next few days, the Bearskin family pulled together as they mourned the loss of two of their own and three of their passengers. Joined by a member of management and a CIRP team leader, the MEC held a meeting in Winnipeg, Man., where pilots gathered to remember the victims, share stories, and find strength to carry on. By the end of November, a trust fund was established for Traczuk's three young children, and a scholarship fund was named in honor of Sawant. Anyone wishing to contribute to either fund should e-mail Dan.Parnham@alpa.org.

"In those dark days, we leaned on each other," says Parnham. "Whenever something like this happens, we ask how and why. Those answers will come. It is only by being there for each other that we will emerge from this tragedy." 🌐

A photo of Flight 311's flight crew one hour before the tragic accident. Far left, Capt. Peter Traczuk; third from left, F/O Aniruddh Sawant.

BRS at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1997 (became an ALPA-represented pilot group when CALPA merged with ALPA)

Number of pilots: 71

Pilot bases: Thunder Bay, Ont.; Winnipeg, Man.; Kitchener-Waterloo, Ont.; and Sioux Lookout, Ont.

Headquarters: Sioux Lookout, Ont.

Operations: Scheduled and charter passenger service

Fleet: 18 Metroliners

Calm Air

Moving Forward

By Rusty Ayers
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

After being buffeted by the winds of change in recent years, Manitoba-based Calm Air flew into smoother skies in 2013, completing a refueling program, bringing back furloughed pilots, and ratifying a new five-year contract that provides stability and improvements for pilots and management alike.

been recalled, but we have done some modest hiring.”

The new agreement took effect in August and provides continued pay stability for the pilot group; improved vacation and sick time; and better rules surrounding trip drops, reassignment, reserve, and release times. The contract also changes the seniority system, giving “top-of-class” seniority preference to new-hire ALPA members or pilots coming from Bearskin or other sister

airlines owned by the carrier’s holding company.

Flying out of bases in Winnipeg and Thompson, Man., Calm Air is an integral part of the Canadian aviation network that makes it possible for isolated communities

company can use the same crews to do these specialized fuel flights,” Cowan notes. “The benefit to our members is that they have a set schedule and know when their time off will be, which enables them to choose the base where they report to and live wherever they want.”

Cooperation between the union and the company also resulted in a smooth transition of aircraft types when Calm Air replaced its fleet of Saab 340 turboprops in late 2012 – early 2013 with ATR 42s and 72s. The airline also flies a single Hawker Siddeley HS748 freighter and two Dornier D328 jets that are popular both for medical evacuations and scheduled passenger service.

As with any new contract, there have been growing pains as the company and the pilot group adapt to some of the new rules. Like many other properties, the airline is trying its best to become more efficient to remain profitable amidst increased competition and rising operating costs, but the outlook continues to brighten.

For the MEC, the greatest challenge will be to embrace change as Calm Air continues to evolve, says Cowan. “We believe that a big part of what makes Calm Air a great place to stay at is that it offers a lifestyle that many of our pilots enjoy and few other companies can offer. Our goal as a union is to help the company as it tries to become more efficient, while also protecting our members and ensuring the contract is followed so that pilots can still feel great about their choice to stay here.”

Capt. Jeff Jacobs
at Kiyuk Lake,
an ice strip in
the Northwest
Territories,
Canada.



Calm Air’s 93 pilots ratified their new agreement in June 2013 by an 86 percent margin, reaching the agreement after a year of planning followed by a short period of bargaining, according to Capt. Dan Cowan, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman.

“Both sides were committed to getting a fair deal done, and we all believe that’s what happened,” says Cowan. “We have also had the good fortune of being able to recall all but two of the furloughed pilots from last year, and the two who haven’t been recalled have made their own choice not to return yet. Not only have furloughed pilots

in the far north to exist. The airline transports the sick to medical care, ships bulk petroleum that fuels generators at community electrical plants, and even flies tourists to polar bear – watching expeditions at the edge of the Hudson Bay.

A unique part of the contract creates special work rules for pilots who operate fuel flights as a means to gain efficiencies for this specialized flying. The rules allow crews to work on an eight-days-on, six-days-off rotation, providing the company with round-the-clock coverage.

“Instead of putting this out for bid and possibly assigning it to the most junior pilot, the

CMA at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1997

Number of pilots: 93,
including two furloughed

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, Man., and Winnipeg, Man.

Headquarters: Thompson, Man.

Fleet: 1 Hawker Siddeley HS748, 8 ATR 42s, 3 ATR 72s, and 2 Fairchild Dornier D328 jets

Canadian North

MEC Completes 2013 To-do List; Enters Negotiations a Year Early

By Kimberly Seitz
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

The Canadian North Master Executive Council (MEC) completed key items on its 2013 to-do list thanks to the hard work of its pilot volunteers. And despite the rigors of piloting in unpredictable winter weather conditions and serving remote and rugged northern Canadian territories, pilot volunteers also opened negotiations a year early.

"To say that 2013 was a busy year is an understatement," says Capt. Chris Kampen, the pilots' MEC chairman, reflecting on the pilot group's 2013 accomplishments before turning his focus to 2014.

A key quality-of-life enhancement that took flight in 2013 is a pilot porting system, designed to build lines that begin and/or end in a pilot's home city rather than transporting pilots to a starting base. "Launching a pilot porting system out of Yellowknife, Ottawa, and Iqaluit proved to be a great way to attract and retain pilots who live in different cities," Kampen adds.

Establishing a Professional Standards Committee was another priority for the MEC in 2013. The committee provides assistance to Canadian North pilots who face additional stressors flying in extremely challenging conditions. A Pilot Assistance Committee is also now staffed and should be fully functional later in 2014. The MEC also created a much-needed Mentor Committee to

help new-hire pilots transition to the airline.

Ticking off another to-do, the MEC developed a post-accident/incident checklist to supplement ALPA's Worldwide Accident Hotline "orange" card. The MEC identified the specific issues endemic to Canadian North operations and developed a reference tool that addresses the airline's fleet and the nuances of flying in Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, which can include landings and takeoffs on remote ice and gravel runways in the Arctic.

Developing a functional MEC website was another completed item from last year's list. "Our website provides access to our ALPA grievance DTS site," says Capt. Olivier Goudreau, the pilot group's MEC vice chairman. "The MEC wanted to make it as easy as possible for the pilots to file a grievance when they feel their contract work rules have been violated."

As for the airline, Canadian North increased its fleet size to seven 737-200s and seven B-737-300s, with two more -300s scheduled for delivery. Canadian North will be the first operator of a B-737-300 quick-change airplane in which the seats are palletized and installed with a moveable bulkhead, giving the airplane more versatility transporting passengers and cargo. The -300s move 70,000 passengers a month.

As 2013 wound down, the pilots entered interest-based negotiations a full year ahead of schedule. "It just made sense strategically," Kampen says. "The company

is doing really well, and we want to capitalize on that momentum. Major client contracts are due in 2014, so it's important to have costs finalized to reflect long-term labor peace as the company prepares those bids."

The company's implementation of a new software program, Merlot.aero, which optimizes daily airplane and crew usage, won't be fully functional until spring 2014, so the MEC is using this opportunity to negotiate the inclusion of a preferential bidding system into the program. "We

have traditionally only been able to bid our days off," Kampen explains, "so it would be a huge accomplishment to implement a program that provides more flexibility in bidding our days off and the types of flying, thus allowing our pilots more time with their families and loved ones."

The Canadian North MEC may be one of the new kids on the ALPA block, but it's achieved great success working with ALPA's professional staff to ensure that all of ALPA's resources are tailored to meet the pilot group's needs. And as 2014 progresses, the MEC is confident that it will be checking more and more off its to-do list—one item at a time. 

CNP at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 2011

Number of pilots: 145

Bases: Edmonton and Calgary, Alb.

Headquarters: Yellowknife, NT, with offices in Edmonton, Alb.

Operations: Scheduled flights and cargo services throughout Nunavut and the Northwest Territories, as well as charter operations throughout Canada and the United States

Fleet: B-737-200s, B-737-300s, and Dash 8-100s



Capt. Olivier Goudreau, left, and Capt. Dale Clarke, right.

CJA at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 2006

Number of pilots: 134

Operations: Provides subcontracting services to vacation charter airlines

Fleet: 5 B-737-800s and 7 B-737-800s leased during high season

CanJet

Pilots Cautiously Optimistic About the Future

By Tawnya Burket
ALPA Communications Specialist

One word can sum up the feelings and overall outlook of the CanJet pilots in 2013—cautious. The year began with tense contract negotiations continuing from 2012. And the year ended with the prospect of

future flying in question as CanJet's contract with its main customer is set to expire in May 2014.

For the first four months of 2013, contract negotiations kept the pilots waiting patiently for their negotiators and Master Executive Council (MEC) to come to them with a ratifiable agreement. Almost a year and a half after direct negotiations began, a tentative agreement was reached with management on May 2. The MEC and negotiators planned and began educational road shows

almost immediately. They visited all four pilot bases in Toronto, Ont.; Montreal, Que.; Halifax, N.S.; and Vancouver, B.C., making direct contact with close to 60 percent of the pilot group at these face-to-face meetings. Voting for

the new contract concluded on May 20, with 80 percent of eligible pilots voting. Of those casting ballots, 87 percent voted in favor of the agreement.

"After negotiations wrapped up, we pieced together the road shows and ratification process rather quickly, allowing the entire process to successfully conclude in less than a month," says Capt. Alex Sirros, the pilots' MEC chairman. "The pilots are essentially pleased with the contract as there are improvements in almost all sections with gains for everyone." Once CanJet implemented the new contract, both the pilots and the company have been complying with its terms, with no real disagreements regarding new contract language.

Unfortunately, the success of achieving a new five-year contract with gains all around was short-lived. Transat A.T., Canada's holiday travel leader, announced in May 2013 that when its charter contract with CanJet expires in May 2014, it will not be renewed. Management has been seeking all available opportunities to obtain flying after May but had not announced any definitive plans as this issue goes to press.

"As 2013 came to a close, we had hoped to hear more concrete commitments from management regarding work beyond May 2014. While talks seem promising, work is yet unsecured," Sirros says.

To keep the pilots informed about hot topics like future flying and contract issues, the MEC has been holding very successful pilot

unity building (PUB) events. In March, the MEC held a PUB event in each hub city. "It was an excellent way to connect with the pilots and discuss the hot topic of ongoing negotiations at the time," notes Sirros. The MEC recently hosted three holiday PUB nights in November in Montreal, Toronto, and Halifax. "We are able to talk openly to the pilots during PUB nights in a relaxed atmosphere, which allow them to ask questions and bond with each other and their union representatives," Sirros says.

Another hot topic for CanJet and other Canadian ALPA-represented pilots is foreign pilots operating in Canada. ALPA and ALPA's Canada Board have long advocated for reforming the Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) to ensure that Canadian airline pilots benefit from available airline industry jobs. In mid-2013, changes were implemented to the TFWP that should gradually eliminate the need for foreign flight crews. Because of these policy changes and the process now in place, CanJet is moving away from hiring pilots from outside the border and is giving furloughed Canadian pilots the opportunity for employment, even if just seasonal, in their native country.

Although their flying commitments are uncertain beyond May, the CanJet pilots are focused on the future and remain hopeful that blue skies are on the horizon. "We're cautiously optimistic that we'll be flying for many years to come," says Sirros.



PHOTO BY CAPT. DAN BARNHAM (BEARSKIN)

Capt. Alex Sirros, MEC chairman, and Jon Mason, MEC vice chairman, attend the dinner at the Canada Aviation and Space Museum after the Group C Caucus meeting for Canadian ALPA pilot leaders in Ottawa, Ont., on Oct. 2, 2013.

CommutAir

Coping With Change

By Rusty Ayers
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

Preparing to reopen contract negotiations and adapting to the FAA's new first officer qualification and training rules are high on the CommutAir pilots' 2014 to-do list.

With the implementation of the new rules, the United Express carrier has had to fundamentally change how it does business with its pilots regarding hiring, training, and scheduling. Retaining qualified pilots, already a challenge at entry-level airlines like CommutAir, is also becoming increasingly difficult as the mainline carriers ramp up their hiring.

"As the industry has adapted, we've adapted as well to make sure that our pilots remain professionally qualified, properly trained, and in compliance with all the new FAA regulations," says Capt. John Bassett, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman.

"We recognized right away that some of our newer first officers were in danger of being grounded when the 1,500-hour rule took effect, so we negotiated a short-term letter of agreement that allowed our lower-time pilots to gain extra hours so that they could build time quickly," Bassett says. "We were able to qualify every one of our pilots before the August deadline."

Like other carriers, CommutAir is also coping with the implementation of the new FAR Part 117 flight- and duty-time rules. The new rule is partially responsible for the company's decision to

abandon its old pencil-and-paper scheduling method in favor of an electronic preferential bidding system (PBS).

After discussing the possible pros and cons of a potential PBS for a number of months, ALPA leaders were prepared when management announced it would implement PBS in early 2014. A PBS letter of agreement was negotiated in short order that will include a number of improvements for CommutAir pilots.

A major goal for the pilots in 2014 is preparing to reopen contract negotiations. They ratified their first-ever ALPA contract in late 2011, and the four-year deal becomes amendable in 2015. While the 2011 contract greatly improved pilot pay and work rules, the group still lags behind some of its peers, and moving nearer to the industry standard remains a priority.

One ongoing item of concern is unlikely to change: the constant turnover of line pilots and union leaders as members accrue enough time and experience to move on to larger carriers. In the past year, the MEC has seen a string of elected representatives and key committee chairmen leave the airline for JetBlue, US Airways, Compass, and elsewhere.

Recognizing that the tougher FAA training and flight-hour requirements may make it harder to find new hires, CommutAir has entered into agreements with several flight school programs in Ohio and Florida to ensure a steady stream of incoming first officers. Students who graduate from these programs and meet hiring standards have

a direct pathway to the right seat of a CommutAir Dash 8.

"We realize that CommutAir is only a transitional job for most of us here, and it's exciting and rewarding to see our friends



Former Vice Chairman F/O Tom Bishop, who left CommutAir in November 2013 to fly for Compass Airlines.

move on to bigger and better things," Bassett acknowledges. "But before they leave, our mission is to make our outgoing pilots not just professional aviators but dedicated union members as well."

Privately held with just 21 Dash 8-Q200/300 turboprops and a little more than 200 pilots, CommutAir is among the smallest airlines in the United Express system. It also is among a handful of regional airlines whose fortunes are tied to a single mainline partner: first Continental and now United. But the carrier continues to occupy a profitable niche in the United system, flying to smaller destinations ringing United's CLE, EWR, and IAD hubs at a lower cost than larger competitors flying regional jets can offer. Recognizing the airline's value, in 2013 United renewed its capacity-purchase agreement with CommutAir for another five years. 

CMT a Glance

Founded: 1989

Number of pilots:
Approximately 210

Pilots joined ALPA: 2008

Headquarters: South Burlington, Vt., with an operations headquarters in North Olmsted, Ohio

Pilot bases: Cleveland, Ohio; Newark, N.J.; and Dulles, Va.

Operations: CommutAir flies to more than 27 cities in 14 U.S. states and Canadian provinces under a capacity-purchase agreement with United Airlines

Fleet: 16 37-seat Dash 8-Q200s and 5 50-seat Dash 8-Q300s

Compass

Bargaining Outside the Box

By Rusty Ayers
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

For the approximately 500 Compass Airlines pilots, thinking outside the box has paid dividends

more, preparation prior to opening talks. It forces you to be flexible and decide what really matters most to your group, and it also works better if your contract is below industry average," says Capt. Dan Schultz, the Compass

Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman.

The Northwest Airlines MEC had specified med-arb bargaining for its yet-to-be-created subsidiary Compass under a letter of agreement ratified in 2006 and agreed to continue the process for the next round of bargaining. The process was designed to

achieve a new contract in 330 days or less, and

that's exactly how it worked for the Compass group.

After opening negotiations in December 2012, the parties bargained directly until June 2013. Then mediator-arbitrator Josh Javits joined the talks, helping the parties reach a tentative agreement on almost every item of the new contract. The seven remaining items were arbitrated before Javits, who had the authority to issue an arbitration award based on industry averages at eight comparable peer airlines. The final, binding award was issued on November 18.

The new six-year agreement includes pay raises in each year of the contract, increased vacation time, higher sick-time accrual, increased per diem, deadhead and minimum day pay, and many other improvements.

"Instead of being trapped for five years while going through Section 6, our pilots can start accruing that increased pay and those benefits right away, and the company wins by having stability and fixed, known pilot costs," Schultz says. "We believe it's a good deal for everyone. In fact, we believe our new contract helps to raise the bar for other fee-for-departure airlines out there. We think it's a major win for our segment of the industry."

With the goal of a new contract achieved, the pilot group is moving on to other challenges. More than 300 pilots will be leaving the airline in the next two and a half years to fly for Delta, thanks to a flow-up agreement renegotiated when Delta sold Compass to Trans States Holdings in 2010.

The flow-up guarantees rapid advancement for the pilots not eligible to move to Delta, but the MEC has recognized that losing so many experienced pilot volunteers will create a challenge in future years. This has sparked an aggressive drive to recruit new volunteers. "Having the flow-up is a nice problem to have, but we're losing many highly qualified people, including some of our officers and key committee chairmen," says Schultz.

And what about that next Compass contract? The MEC ensured that the same successful bargaining blueprint will be used the next time around, writing contract language that requires the union and the company to use med-arb again when the agreement becomes amendable at the end of this decade. 



A Compass E175 at New York's LaGuardia Airport overlooks a Delta A320.

at the bargaining table. In November 2013, the pilots announced that they had come to an agreement with the company on a new six-year contract in less than a year by using mediation-arbitration (med-arb) rather than the traditional Railway Labor Act's Section 6 bargaining process.

The difference between med-arb and Section 6 couldn't be clearer when comparing the process at Compass to traditional negotiations. While it can take some groups five years or even longer to reach a tentative agreement (TA) under Section 6, Compass pilots got a TA with management in less than a year.

"Med-arb prevents either side from dragging out the process, but it requires a lot of focus and as much, if not

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

Number of pilots:
Approximately 500

Management: First owned as a wholly owned subsidiary of Northwest and then Delta, Compass is now owned by Trans States Holdings, Inc., which runs it separately from its other airlines, Trans States and GoJet

Operations: More than 190 flights daily to 57 destinations throughout the United States and Canada as Delta Connection

Pilot bases: Minneapolis–St. Paul, Minn., and Detroit, Mich. The company will open a Los Angeles, Calif., domicile in February

Headquarters: Minneapolis, Minn.

Fleet: 6 Embraer 170s and 36 Embraer E175s

Delta

Pilots and Management Achieve Gains by Working Together

By Kelly Regus
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

The 11,500 Delta pilots make up 23 percent of ALPA's members and since July 2012 have been operating under an industry-leading contract, due in large part to the commitment of the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) to seize opportunities to negotiate amendments to the pilots' working agreement (PWA) six months before its amendable date.

The MEC agreed to an expedited negotiating process that culminated in an agreement in less than four months. The agreement, which included three pay increases in the past 18 months, provides industry-leading pay rates, profit sharing, and retirement plan improvements. It also facilitated Delta's acquisition of a fleet of 88 B-717s. The first of these was put into operations this past fall. B-717s will continue to be added to the fleet through 2015. In addition, three B-737-900s per month are being delivered to Delta, and the company recently announced an order for 30 A321s and 10 A330s.

The airline has announced that it will hire 300 pilots, but in all likelihood that number will be much higher. The most recent advance entitlements bids have provided for new captain positions, and prospects are favorable for substantial upward movement for Delta pilots. These prospects are further enhanced by the scope protections in the 2012 PWA that

increase the share of all Delta domestic flying operated on Delta narrowbodies and ensures new international flying opportunities for the pilot group.

The MEC continues to work to improve the pilots' pay and working conditions whenever opportunities present themselves. Since the conclusion of Section 6 negotiations, letters of agreement that provide scheduling enhancements as well as protections for Pacific flying and the Virgin Atlantic joint venture have been achieved.

The MEC has also placed a significant focus on safe flying operations through the Central Air Safety Committee (CASC), which is composed of more than 200 volunteers who serve on 11 safety subcommittees. In 2013, the CASC was highly engaged locally, nationally, and globally.

This past year, Delta management invited the CASC to join its Data Analysis Group, Threat Management Group, and Standard Text Oversight Committee. The pilots are also co-sponsoring with Delta Flight Ops a year-long Active Pilot Monitoring Workshop to produce recommendations for improving how to identify, train, and evaluate critical pilot monitoring skills.

Three areas of the pilots' CASC initiatives have seen marked involvement:

Aviation Safety Action Program. Knowing that the prospect of formal simulator or flight training can have a negative effect on pilots' willingness to report errors, the CASC, the FAA, and Delta have agreed to carefully weigh



PHOTO BY FIO CHRIS NEVINS (DELTA)

A view of the old Terminal 3 at John F. Kennedy International Airport.

the necessity for training if a report is pure sole-source and would otherwise be unknown to the company or the FAA. Significantly, the formal training rate has dropped to less than one percent.

Automation addiction and loss of control. Automation addiction and loss of control are significant safety concerns. The CASC continues to advocate for a unified effort to teach specific manual flying skill maintenance exercises.

Unstable approaches with no go-arounds. The CASC is studying other airlines' efforts that have successfully reduced unstable approaches while improving go-around compliance rates to better understand what could be successfully applied at Delta.

The joint efforts of the MEC, the CASC, and Delta's flight safety team have produced a safety culture and record that are the envy of the airline industry. This record is due in large measure to the competence and professionalism of Delta line pilots, who have made it their mission to see that the approximately 160 million passengers who boarded a Delta airplane in 2013 arrived safely at their destinations. ●

DAL at a Glance

Number of pilots: 11,704

Joint ventures and alliances: SkyTeam Alliance and joint ventures with Air France-KLM-Alitalia, Virgin Australia, and Virgin Atlantic

Operations: Delta and its Connection carriers fly to more than 330 destinations in 65 countries on 6 continents

Pilot bases: Atlanta, Ga.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Detroit, Mich.; Los Angeles, Calif.; Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.; New York City; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Seattle, Wash.

Hub cities: Amsterdam; Atlanta, Ga.; Cincinnati, Ohio; Detroit, Mich.; Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minn.; New York-JFK; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Tokyo-Narita

Headquarters: Atlanta, Ga.

Fleet: More than 700 mainline airplanes consisting of A319s, A320s, A330s, B-717s, B-737s, B-747s, B-757s, B-767s, B-777s, DC-9s, MD-88s, and MD-90s

Endeavor Air

Hopeful Signs After a Difficult Year

By **Kimberly Seitz**
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

Let's recap the past 365 days: As 2012 came to a close, the pilots at then-Pinnacle, now Endeavor Air, were mired in bankruptcy. In 2013, the pilots helped save the company by ratifying a painful, but necessary, restructuring agreement; got

hiring for a set number of Pinnacle pilots at Delta Air Lines under a Streamlined Selection Process (SSP).

Exiting bankruptcy in May 2013 as a wholly owned subsidiary of Delta, Pinnacle's new management team moved its headquarters from Memphis, Tenn., to Minneapolis, Minn., and changed the airline's name from Pinnacle Airlines to Endeavor Air.

Although the imminent threat of bankruptcy passed in January 2013, the Endeavor pilots still faced numerous challenges and upheaval as the year of change unfolded:

- The MEC renewed its focus on a grievance resolution process to address the backlog of more than 1,000 pilot grievances accumulated during the bankruptcy, and worked with the company to designate company-funded ALPA duty pilots to work with Crew Scheduling in the Operations Control Center to reduce and prevent contract violations.
- The Atlanta and Memphis domiciles were closed.
- The company began to retire its CRJ200s in August.
- The company received the first of 40 additional CRJ900s the airline is expected to have on the property by the end of 2014.

During the October meeting conducted in Herndon, Va., the MEC held its officer elections, installing Capt. Jonathan Allen as chairman and Capt. Michael Yoder as vice chairman and re-electing F/O Nathan Hillard as secretary-treasurer.

With new officers elected, domicile shifts finalized, and

new status representatives in place, the MEC emerged from the October meeting "with a strategic focus on recovering compensation lost in bankruptcy, improving career progression for our pilots, and improving quality of life while we're here," says Allen.

The MEC is investigating two new initiatives, the first to replace crew room bulletin boards with LCD monitors for more effective and up-to-date communications with the Endeavor pilots and the second to bring application, résumé, and interview-preparation seminars to the domiciles to "give our pilots who wish to move on every advantage," Allen says.

Endeavor pilots who were offered jobs at Delta under the SSP along with premerger Mesaba pilots eligible to flow to Delta under a sunset agreement will begin class at Delta on January 13.

"Given our improving operational reliability, competitive cost structure, and our relatively young CRJ200 fleet, Endeavor is well positioned to retain a significant portion of our current 50-seat airplanes for the foreseeable future," notes Ryan Gumm, Endeavor Air CEO.

Gumm's statement is seen as a positive indication that the CRJ200 fleet may not be retired at Endeavor, and the company has announced plans to hire 300–400 pilots in 2014, with classes scheduled to begin on January 6.

While the Endeavor Air pilots endured much chaos as a result of the bankruptcy, the changes they have made have provided them a solid foundation from which to advance their careers. 



PHOTO PROVIDED BY ENDEAVOR AIR

New CRJ900 at Bombardier's Montréal – Mirabel facility destined for delivery to Endeavor Air.

new management along with a name change; voted in new Master Executive Council (MEC) officers; and are finally on a path of recovery as they move into 2014.

"The pilots were given a stark choice between holding on to our current contract and seeing Pinnacle wound down or accepting drastic cuts to our pay and work rules to save the airline and the jobs of employees in all areas of Pinnacle's operations," says Capt. Tom Wychor, the former MEC chairman. The seven-year deal included pay cuts, longevity caps, increased health-care costs, and a reduction in retirement benefits.

In recognition of the magnitude of the pilots' concessions, the contract also included a bridge agreement that provided a one-time cash payment (paid in May 2013) and guaranteed

PCL at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1988 (as Express Airlines I before it changed its name to Pinnacle in 2002 and Endeavor Air in 2013); purchased Colgan Air in 2007; purchased Mesaba Airlines in 2010

Number of pilots: 2,000

Operations: Up to 1,000 daily flights as Delta Connection to more than 100 cities across the United States and Canada

Pilot domiciles: Detroit, Mich.; Minneapolis, Minn.; and New York's JFK

Headquarters: Minneapolis, Minn.

Fleet: 120 Canadair CRJ200s and 50 CRJ900s

Evergreen

Questions Remain Regarding the Airline's Survival

By **Tawnya Burket**
ALPA Communications
Specialist

The year 2013 did not begin with a promise of blue skies for Evergreen International Airlines' flightcrew members. As 2012 ended, the cockpit crews faced some harsh realities—a failed tentative collective bargaining agreement that lacked enhancements crewmembers desired, the grounding of the airline's B-747 classic fleet, and more furloughs. The National Mediation Board recessed negotiations in 2013, but the crewmembers remained dedicated, continuing to fly for their unstable, financially burdened company.

In 2013, management continued efforts to clear the financial storm brewing for years at the airline. Evergreen began transition training of pilots on the company's B-747-400s. The training was intermittent, however, as Evergreen failed to make regular payments to United for the training facility it contracted to train crews in Denver, Colo.

With the decline in cargo business and U.S. military operations in the Middle East winding down, Evergreen's flying was diminishing. As debt piled up, Evergreen's parent company sold its helicopter division and reaffirmed its commitment to its airline business. Erickson Air-Crane bought Evergreen Helicopters, Inc., valued at \$276.3 million, in March.

However, even with funding from the sale, conditions at Evergreen continued to weaken. Crewmembers began

to question the survivability of their airline, based on the company's debt load.

"It's hard to go to work, sometimes on the other side of the world, and not know if the airline will shut down or if you're going to get paid for your services," says Capt. James Touchette, chairman of the crewmembers' Master Executive Council (MEC).

Last summer, a Yamhill County judge in McMinnville, Ore., granted judgments against the airline for overdue contributions to the pilots' pension plans. Evergreen signed two confessions of judgments for the pension contributions for 2011 and 2012. The first payment of \$744,651 went unpaid in May, as did the second payment of \$680,359 due August 15.

Crewmembers experienced further negative effects of the company's financial situation in the form of late paychecks, having their own voluntary contributions to 401(k) plans delayed, and being required to use personal credit cards at crew hotels across the globe because of company cards being declined.

In November, Evergreen informed its employees of its plan to cease operations; the last scheduled flight, which had two rotations, landed at Travis Air Force Base in California on Nov. 29, 2013, and on December 3.

"With the turmoil we've endured over the past years and months, I'm sure that we have all anticipated the day would come when we would hear that Evergreen will shut down," Touchette told crewmembers after hearing the news.

News reports also verified that the state of Oregon

was notified of mass layoffs and the airline's closure. Management later contradicted this news, stating that the "executive team continues to work diligently to look for longer-term solutions to the current issues that cause interruptions to our operations" and that rumors in the news media of Evergreen ceasing operations were false.

Evergreen management met with lienholders on Dec. 3, 2013, to determine the company's future, but a decision has not been made public as this issue goes to press. All of the airplanes are parked, indicating there are no revenue flights. However, the airline is still in existence, maintaining its certificate of operations per the FAA's FAR Part 119, which states that a minimum staff of five shall be maintained for up to a 90-day period from the time an airline's last airplane is parked—in Evergreen's case, early December.

Since announcement of the shutdown, the MEC has remained in constant contact with ALPA's national officers and staff to assist the crewmembers.

The MEC prepared its crewmembers for the ensuing shutdown by informing them of resources available through ALPA—including the Furloughed Pilots Support program—and prompting them to update résumés, prepare electronic portfolios, and acquire training records from Evergreen headquarters before the possible closure.

As 2014 begins, it is now more obvious that the end of an airline that operated for 38 years will become a reality. 



PHOTO BY PFE HIROSHI ANDO (EVERGREEN, FURLOUGHED)

An aerial view of Evergreen's Wings & Waves Waterpark, an indoor, all-season educational waterpark that includes 10 waterslides, a wave pool, and children's museum—with a massive Evergreen International B-747-100 atop the building. The waterpark is a separate entity from the airline and should remain after the airline's closure.

EIA at a Glance

Flightcrew members joined ALPA: 2007

Number of flightcrew members: 187 (All crewmembers on furlough)

Headquarters: McMinnville, Ore.

Pilot base: New York (JFK)

Operations: With a fleet of parked B-747s, Evergreen specialized in charter and contract freighter operations around the globe

XJT at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 2004

Number of pilots: More than 2,800

Operations: Flies as United Express to 42 states plus destinations in Canada, Mexico, and the Caribbean

Pilot bases: Chicago, Ill.; Cleveland, Ohio; Denver, Colo.; Houston, Tex.; Kansas City, Mo.; Newark, N.J.; and Washington, D.C.

Headquarters: Atlanta, Ga.

Fleet: 251 airplanes, including ERJ 135s and ERJ 145s

ExpressJet

Pilots Reach Tentative Agreement

By **Lydia Jakub**
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

ExpressJet pilots are currently faced with making a tough decision: voting on a tentative joint collective bargaining agreement (JCBA). This agreement, if ratified, would be the leading pilot contract in the regional airline industry. It would also be a significant step toward completing the merger of ExpressJet and Atlantic Southeast that began in 2010.

“This was a difficult negotiations process,” says Capt. Chris Grable, chairman of the ExpressJet pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC). “The landscape has changed drastically over the last three years, affecting the tone at the bargaining table and the direction of the agreement. As we fought to secure improvements, the company

sought concessions. With the JCBA, we were able to protect much of our pay and quality of life and help position the company for success.”

In November 2013, the ExpressJet and Atlantic Southeast MECs each approved the tentative JCBA to go out to the combined mem-

bership for ratification. This decision was not made lightly. The MECs analyzed the JCBA, existing pilot contracts, and market trends.

The JCBA is a top-tier regional pilot contract. While other agreements have some sections that are better, the overall compensation, quality-of-life protections, and employee benefits within the JCBA make it an industry-

leading contract for the fee-for-departure airlines. It is also, however, a concessionary agreement in that there were some changes to the pilots’ work rules and benefits in order to reduce costs. The two pilot groups’ leaders believe that this difficult decision will help stabilize the company so that it can better compete and win new business.

Airline performance is also key. It has suffered since the merger, and efforts are being made to rebuild operational integrity. While weather, maintenance, and other reasons certainly play a role, the root cause for this degradation is that the company is running two separate airlines. Management is working to address these issues, and progress is being made; however, much work lies ahead to get the operation running smoothly.

SkyWest, Inc., which owns ExpressJet/Atlantic Southeast and SkyWest Airlines, has been making moves to reflect its operations as mainline carriers further reduce their 50-seat capacity. In mid-2013, SkyWest unveiled a huge aircraft order of approximately 600 new jets, totaling nearly \$22 billion. It plans to be the launch customer for the 80-seat Embraer 175-E2 and take delivery of existing Embraer 175s later this year. SkyWest’s strategy includes running two profitable airlines so that it can place aircraft based on geographical demand.

Although there are no guarantees for larger aircraft or new business, the JCBA, if ratified, would position the pilot group for maximum success.

In December 2013, the

Joint Negotiating Committee (JNC), composed of pilot negotiators from ExpressJet and Atlantic Southeast, and representatives from both MECs conducted road shows in all of the pilot bases to educate pilots about the agreement. They were also in the crew rooms and conducted all-pilot conference calls. Voting opened in mid-December and will close on January 14. The informational blitz will continue throughout the voting period to ensure that every pilot has an opportunity to ask questions about the agreement and provide feedback.

The ultimate decision on this tentative JCBA is in the hands of the pilot group. Many of the provisions, if it is ratified, would be effective February 1. There are, however, some items contained within the agreement that would either be phased in (such as a preferential bidding system) or out (such as the defined contribution plan) over a specified period of time.

If the agreement is not ratified by a majority vote, per the Transition and Process Agreement, the parties would then enter into mediated discussions under the National Mediation Board. It is uncertain at this time whether the pilots would be starting from the failed agreement or if management would seek deeper concessions.

“ExpressJet has a proud history, and our pilots are some of the best in the business. We remain committed to building a successful super-regional airline that benefits all stakeholders—partners, passengers, investors, and employees,” concludes Grable. 



From left to right, F/O Will Blackburn, Capt. Eric Easterlin (now a United first officer), Capt. Brian Rosenstein, Capt. David Oeswein, and Capt. Andrew Olson at an ALPA leadership event on Capitol Hill.

FedEx Express

Pilots Unified in Obtaining New Contract

By Courtney Bland
ALPA Communications
Specialist

In a year dominated by Section 6 bargaining, the FedEx Express Master Executive Council (MEC) saw in 2013 the continuation of internal improvements essential to the MEC's strategic plan. "Our strategic plan hinges on the development of our communication abilities and maintaining internal cohesiveness through regular contact and reporting," says Capt. Scott Stratton, the pilots' MEC chairman. "We were successful in 2013 because we substantially improved in both these areas. As an organization, we realize that our strength lies in communication on several levels."

The MEC spent the year refining its ability to communicate with the pilots. It used professionally produced videos, a revitalized pilot-to-pilot network, accessible in-person meetings, and interactive web technology. The pilots responded with regular feedback and support. "There is nothing more important than communication with the pilots. No matter the expertise that our volunteers bring, the goals come from the pilots. Without effective communication with the pilots, we would be nowhere," Stratton acknowledges.

The year started with the exchange of Section 6 openers after almost two years of work as part of the interim discussion model agreed to in the pilots' 2010 contract agreement. "In 2010, we elected to divest from historical negotiating processes and

engaged with FedEx management in a bargaining profile that met the original intent of the Railway Labor Act. We reached a short-term agreement contract with a few significant improvements and agreed to the interim discussion model," says Stratton. "We agreed to the ongoing process of interim discussions to minimize our next round of Section 6 bargaining."

Thus far, the decision to engage in interim discussions has paid off. In April 2013, the FedEx pilots ratified a letter of agreement concerning the



introduction of B-767s; much of the progress toward that agreement occurred in 2012 under the interim discussion model. Of the pilots voting, 87 percent supported the agreement. Later in 2013, the MEC reached an agreement with management concerning some significant foreign duty assignment (FDA) ongoing implementation measures that provided improved benefits to FDA-based pilots.

"In a matter of months, we reached two agreements that significantly aided our pilots, but we did it as we negotiated through other Section 6 issues. Needless to say, we are proud of these achievements. I attribute our success to hard work, unity, and MEC support. I think the MEC support was significant, in part, because

of enhanced communication among the MEC, the officers, and our committee structure. If we had not decided to improve that communication, I'm not sure that we would have achieved as much," Stratton says.

As the FedEx pilots move forward into 2014, obtaining an industry-leading contract is at the forefront of their goals. "The time for a contract is now. Our negotiators have already reached agreement on the core issues that need to be resolved. Our team—the pilots and their families, the MEC, the officers, the volunteer structure, and ALPA staff—are unified. I am convinced that the strength of that unity will bring us a proper agreement in 2014," says Stratton.

The 4,353 FedEx Express pilots are spread across the globe, represented by seven councils located in three domiciles as well as pilots assigned to foreign duty in Hong Kong and Cologne, Germany. Understanding the communications challenges that this global group faces, the MEC continues to engage its members through a variety of communication methods designed to better reach pilots, including a revamped website, interactive conference and video calls, video messages, e-mails, and text notification.

With more than 375 airports served worldwide, the airline has an extensive and varied fleet. The pilots deliver approximately 3.9 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: 4,353

Headquarters: Memphis, Tenn.

Fleet: 91 B-757s, 3 B-767s, 23 B-777s, 71 A300s, 30 A310s, 63 MD-10s, and 64 MD-11s

FAB at a Glance

Founded: In 1946 as Bradley Air Service, now wholly owned by the Inuit people of Quebec through the Makivik Corporation

Number of crewmembers: 142

Pilots joined ALPA: 2008

Pilot bases: Ottawa, Ont.; Yellowknife, NT; Iqaluit, NU; and Edmonton, Alb.

Headquarters: Kanata, Ont.

Operations: Provides scheduled passenger and cargo service between 30 northern communities plus charter service worldwide

Fleet: 7 B-737-200s (four combi), 3 B-737-400s (two combi, 1 passenger), 1 B-767F, 9 ATR 42-300s, 2 ATR 72-212s (all combi), and 2 Lockheed L-382 Hercules

First Air

Regaining Altitude

By Rusty Ayers
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

After several years of being buffeted by tragedy and uncertainty, First Air is now on track to strengthen its status as the “Airline of the North,” with a new CEO, a new pilot agreement, new airplanes, and a big new freight contract with one of Canada’s most historic companies.

“Like all the northern carriers, our airline has been affected by the economic downturn. But we accomplished a lot in 2013, and it’s fair to say we believe we’ve turned the corner and are looking forward to the new year,” says Capt. Peter Black, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman.

Offering scheduled service to some of the most remote

The group was a charter member of the President’s Committee for Remote Operations (PCRO), formed in 2012 to push for safety improvements at rugged northern airstrips, many of which have unpaved runways and few if any landing aids. Black chairs the PCRO.

The pilots’ greatest accomplishment in 2013 was finally completing a new contract, the first negotiated by ALPA since the former First Air Pilots Association (FAPA) merged with the Association five years ago. The talks took three years, with the bulk of the new agreement negotiated directly between the pilots and the company with a handful of remaining items decided by an arbitrator.

The five-year agreement is retroactive to 2010 and will become amendable in 2015. In addition to a signing

bonus, pilots will receive raises totaling more than five percent over the duration of the deal. The agreement also includes improvements to vacation and reserve, a new meal allowance, and higher living allowances for crewmembers located in expensive far northern communities.

Black credits new First Air CEO Brock Friesen with breaking the contract

deadlock. Before Friesen’s arrival, the airline had seen a revolving door of CEOs, COOs, and other executives.

“Having the continuity of a single leader with a defined plan and the authority to

carry it out has paid big dividends for us, not just with the contract but in other areas of management as well,” says Black.

In July, the same month that the contract was finalized, First Air announced a big new freight customer, Canada’s famed North West Company. Associated with the frontier since it began selling supplies and equipment to fur traders in 1779, the North West Company has grown into one of the largest shippers in the Arctic. It hired First Air to deliver food and other cargo to its stores in remote communities in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Nunavik.

Last summer, the airline also acquired three more modern, fuel-efficient B-737-400s. Two have been retrofitted as combis to carry a mix of passengers and palletted cargo, while the third remains in an all-passenger configuration.

The new business and expanded fleet are particularly welcome since management spent much of the previous year trying unsuccessfully to sell the airline.

In October, the MEC concluded its 2013 “FABulous Flying” calendar campaign to raise money for the families of First Air Flight 6560 crewmembers. Thanks to donations and contributions from ALPA national officers, the Canada Board, the Alaska and Jazz MECs, and individual pilots across North America, the campaign raised more than \$17,000 and each of the young children who lost a parent in the accident received almost \$2,500 for their future education. 



PHOTO BY MATT MCCULLOUGH

A First Air ATR 42 taxis for takeoff at Baker Lake, Ont.

and inhospitable places on the planet, First Air provides a lifeline to a few dozen communities scattered across the Canadian Arctic and also flies cargo charters around the world.

Hawaiian

Collaboration Fuels Expansion

By **Rusty Ayers**
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

After several years of double-digit growth regarding the number of pilots, fleet size, and routes, Hawaiian Airlines slowed its pace slightly in 2013, but the pilot group and management continue to enjoy a collaborative partnership that has paid dividends for both sides.

The pilots and management negotiated new pay rates related to the planned acquisition of a new aircraft type, ratified a series of letters of agreement with mid-contract improvements in several areas, and began operating even more flights to new destinations along the Pacific Rim. And in 2014 Hawaiian is poised to enter what could be its biggest market yet—mainland China. With its code-share arrangement with China Airlines, Hawaiian has been authorized to begin flying to Beijing in April.

Among the other changes, the airline closed its long-time pilot domicile in Seattle, Wash., and appears to have halted—at least for now—plans to expand its flying to the eastern United States.

“Our mission as a Master Executive Council (MEC) is to advocate for our pilots. We help management where it’s appropriate, and make sure our crews are recognized as an essential component of the airline and are compensated accordingly,” says Capt. Lem Terrell, the pilots’ MEC chairman.

Hawaiian pilots started 2013 by ratifying a letter of agreement (LOA) that set pay rates and work rules for

new narrowbody airplanes. Soon after, the airline ordered 16 Airbus A321 NEOs, with options for nine more. The fuel-efficient A321s are expected to begin arriving in 2016.

The NEOs will be a mid-size addition to the airline’s fleet of B-717s, B-767s, and Airbus A330s. They will also augment existing transpacific service and could be used to open new routes between the islands and smaller-market U.S. mainland cities.

In July, the MEC negotiated eight new LOAs with management with improvements for check airmen, pilots on disability, deadhead travel benefits, upgrades for pilots under training freezes, and protections for pilots who participated in the airline’s first-ever Line Operations Safety Audit.

In addition to the upcoming new Beijing route, in 2013 Hawaiian began serving Auckland, New Zealand; its fifth Japanese destination, Sendai; and Taipei, Taiwan. It ended service to Manila in the Philippines in July.

The airline had planned to begin operating a wholly owned feeder carrier called “Ohana by Hawaiian” to extend its reach into smaller communities in the islands. The operating certificate to do so, by the subsidiary Empire Airlines in Utah, was delayed, however, due to the federal government shutdown. Proving flights were expected to begin in December 2013 or January 2014.

Like other ALPA pilot groups, the Hawaiian pilots have been gearing up for the implementation of the FAA’s new flight- and duty-

time rules. The MEC held a series of flight-time/duty-time workshops for pilots in December. “FAR 117 will affect everything we do. We have interisland pilots flying



PHOTO BY F/O BRIAN SHIROTA

Capt. Koichiro Kono standing in front of a Hawaiian B-717 during sunset at Kona International Airport on the island of Hawaii.

multiple legs each day, and at the same time we have augmented crews flying some of the longest overwater routes in the world. Once again, we’ll need to work with the company to ensure that everyone understands the new rules and that they are being adhered to properly,” Terrell says.

Looking to the future, the MEC has already appointed a new Negotiating Committee, which has begun preparing for Section 6 bargaining, even though the pilots’ contract is not amendable until 2015.

The MEC is also preparing for the possibility of a future merger or other corporate transaction, as Hawaiian’s rapid growth and steady profitability has recently attracted new investors. The MEC’s goal is to have in place a strategy, funds, and volunteers in the event such a transaction occurs.

“The pilots look forward to continuing their collaborative relationship with management and to seeing the airline’s fleet and operations grow; 2014 looks to be a good year,” says Terrell. 🌊

HAL at a Glance

Number of pilots: 625

Headquarters: Honolulu, Hawaii

Pilot base: Honolulu, Hawaii

Operations: Hawaiian operates more than 150 daily flights connecting the islands of Oahu, Maui, Kauai, and Hawaii. It offers nonstop service to the Hawaiian islands from 10 cities on the U.S. mainland and also has direct, nonstop flights from Honolulu to American Samoa, Tahiti, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and Japan

Fleet: 18 B-717-200s; 14 B-767-300ERs; and 16 A330-200s, with 7 more on order and options for 5 more. On order: 6 A350-300s, to be delivered 2017–2020; 16 A321 NEOs, with options for 9 more. Hawaiian also owns 3 ATR 42 turboprops that will be operated by a regional subsidiary

Island Air

A New Chapter

By **Lydia Jakub**
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

Island Air is working toward being more than just the leading regional airline for interisland travel in Hawaii. The company wants total interisland market domination.

In February 2013, Island Air was purchased by Ohana Airline Holdings LLC, a private holding company owned by Oracle founder and billionaire Larry Ellison. Under his ownership, there's a new direction for improving and expanding interisland service.

"This transaction gave Island Air a new life," says Capt. Monte Vories, chairman of the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC). "For too long, the company's business plan was set on survival mode. The pilots fought long and hard to keep our airline flying, and we embrace this new chapter. We hope that it brings renewed success to our airline, our employees, and our passengers for many years to come."

Getting to this point has not been without its challenges. A Dash 8 operation for more than a decade, Island Air management began looking to refleet with ATR 72s. This triggered a provision in the pilot contract to begin negotiations for appropriate pay rates, and discussions began in mid-2012. These talks focused on fair compensation for flying the larger airplanes—pay rates, how sick time and vacation time would be paid and administered with the new rates, training,

and other related items.

During these negotiations, the company, in January 2013, announced that it had entered into a preliminary agreement for the sale of Island Air. Supplemental information also indicated that the sale was contingent upon the ATR being up and running by February 2013 and concessions from all three labor groups. The alternative, according to management, was that Island Air would cease operations in March 2013.

With only a few short weeks to get a deal done, management provided the MEC with a list of proposed concessions that it claimed were essential to the overall state of the company and a requirement for the sale of the airline to move forward. The MEC responded firmly that pilot costs were not the problem and that management was over-reaching.

Intense discussions soon yielded an agreement that reflected the needs of the pilot group while providing the company with the means for stability and growth. The agreement protected pilot pay, preserved key work rules, and ensured that Island Air pilots would be able to maintain a reasonable quality of life when flying the new airplanes.

The agreement passed by a strong majority vote. Every single voting member participated in the balloting process.

The sale was finalized in February 2013, after Island Air secured agreements with its other labor groups and received FAA certification to operate 64-seat ATR 72s.

The fleet conversion from the Dash to the ATR has since

been completed, and the operation is running smoothly. There were, however, some scheduling delays during the transition period. The MEC worked with management to address these issues through modifications to the new agreement. The pilots received "show time" pay and credit for reporting one hour before departure during the transition period.

Now senior management is working to rebuild the airline and position it for continued growth and expanded service. Ellison also owns the island of Lanai, and following his acquisition of Island Air, the primary focus for the operation was on developing reliable service for Lanai passengers, while maintaining limited interisland service between the other islands of Hawaii. This has since changed. Recently, management announced that it intends to double the fleet over the coming year to develop a major interisland presence.

Led by CEO Paul Casey, the former CEO of Hawaiian Airlines, the airline is also publicly promoting its three priorities—safe operations, on-time performance, and customer service. Key to this success is the pilot group.

"We are excited about the company's plans to expand our service and customer base around the islands," Vories says. "It will take continued teamwork, however, between management and the employees for these plans to be realized. We have proven our commitment through our actions and look forward to strengthening Island Air's presence in the local marketplace." 



Capt. Diana Feddersohn and F/O Darrick Young prepare for flight.

AIS at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1989

Number of pilots: 50

Operations: Approximately 36 daily flights

Service: Island Air is Hawaii's leading regional airline, with 331 weekly flights to and from the islands of Oahu, Maui, Molokai, Lanai, and Kauai

Fleet: 4 ATR 72s

Jazz Aviation

Building a Strategic Future

By Jen Lofquist
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

No pilot would consider taking off without a flight plan. For the Jazz pilots, their strategic plan, supported by robust communications, is serving as a flight plan as they tackle an ever-changing environment.

Jazz, the second largest employer of pilots in Canada, operates as the major partner in the up-to-75-seats market for Canada's largest airline, Air Canada. Flying to more destinations in North America than any other Canadian airline with approximately 800 flights each day, Jazz is a significant player.

The pilots' strategic plan is evaluated at each regular Master Executive Council (MEC) meeting and revised if necessary. The MEC has also instituted a robust communications plan that uses appropriate technology to reach the pilots that are based across Canada. "We know that not every pilot gets information the same way. This is why we work to ensure we're reaching out with a number of communication tools," says Capt. Claude Buraglia, the pilots' MEC chairman. "It's not enough to send out an e-mail and assume the message has been received. We want to make sure the pilots hear from us, but also that we hear from them."

To that end, the MEC has been hosting The Contact, a live blog whereby pilots can submit questions on their MEC site via e-mail or by text message, and the MEC responds quickly with factual information. The first of these

was held in June 2013 with more than 50 questions being submitted and answered during an eight-hour period. The event was repeated in October with similar success.

The pilots also ended the year with pilot unity building nights in every domicile. These events provide an opportunity for pilots to directly interact with MEC and Local Executive Council officers and ask questions in a casual setting.

These communication efforts have been especially important as the MEC is facing significant challenges. Last fall, Air Canada announced that it was seeking bids from other regional airlines to fly certain transborder routes—some of which is currently done by Jazz—as part of Air Canada's efforts to cut costs.

Jazz is somewhat protected by its strong capacity-purchase agreement (CPA) with Air Canada. This CPA, in effect until Dec. 31, 2020, mandates the amount of capacity that Air Canada has agreed to purchase from Jazz. Although Air Canada could reduce the amount of flying performed by Jazz, the effect is limited by the number of covered aircraft and minimum block-hour guarantees. "Although we have strong protection in our CPA," comments Buraglia, "we can't rely on that CPA to fully ensure our future. As stakeholders in our company's success, we must and will take an active role in what lies ahead."

As part of this commitment, the pilot group works closely with management and Jazz's parent company, Chorus Aviation. Chorus has indicated to the MEC that it

wants to diversify its income stream. In August, the MEC ratified a letter of understanding that provides some scheduling flexibility to help the airline as it actively seeks charter flying. But not all of this income diversification is expected to involve flight operations. The company might seek ground handling contracts, maintenance contracts, and other nonflying sources of revenue. "As part of Jazz Aviation, it's in our best interest to allow the company the flexibility to seek additional streams of revenue," Buraglia notes.

The pilot group has also prepared for any possible corporate restructuring that may affect them. The pilots are contributing to a strategic initiative fund that will only be used if needed. "No one, and certainly no pilot group, can be fully prepared for every possibility," Buraglia says. "But with the help of our strategic plan, our strategic



PHOTO BY CAPT. NOREEN NEWTON (JAZZ)

initiative fund, and our communications program, we feel that we have a strong base to protect this pilot group, our company, and our careers as we move forward." 

JAZ at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 2001

Number of pilots: 1,450

Operations: Jazz transports about 9.1 million passengers annually on more than 800 daily flights to 82 destinations across Canada and the United States

Pilot bases: Vancouver, B.C.; Calgary, Alb.; Toronto, Ont.; Montreal, Que.; and Halifax, N.S.

Headquarters: Dartmouth, N.S.

Fleet: 25 CRJ200s, 16 CRJ705s, 34 Dash 8-100s, 26 Dash 8-300s, and 21 Dash 8-400s; charter fleet, 5 airplanes that vary from season to season

Jazz Aviation Dash 8s lined up for boarding in Vancouver, B.C.

Kelowna Flightcraft

Intense Negotiations Result in Ratified Pilot Contract

By Kimberly Seitz
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

The Kelowna Flightcraft Master Executive Council (MEC) and its Negotiating Committee spent the beginning of 2013 preparing for contract negotiations that were slated to start in 2014 and instead ended the year with a ratified collective agreement. Ninety-six percent of the pilots who cast ballots voted in favor of the agreement, which was reached after three and a half months of intensely focused negotiations.

"We opened our negotiations earlier to show our commitment to the company and to our customer," says Capt. Derek Porter, the pilots' MEC chairman. Kelowna

needed cost certainty to be more competitive when it submitted its bid in response to the Canada Post Group of Companies [CPGoC] Request for Proposal due in late 2013."

The company approached the MEC in April with a request to begin early negotiations, so Capt. Brett Chanin, the MEC Negotiating Committee chairman, the team of pilot volunteers, and ALPA staff set about preparing to open in June.

"The company expressed a desire to participate in interest-based negotiations [IBN]," notes Chanin, a type of negotiating that has been successfully employed in

Canada for a number of years. "Since this was a style of negotiating we hadn't previously used, the MEC Negotiating Committee and company negotiators attended an IBN workshop in June, just before the start of negotiations." IBN training was conducted by experienced federal conciliation and mediation officers from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Services.

The MEC Contract Study Committee worked with ALPA staff to develop a pilot survey that guided the Negotiating Committee's priorities. "The five-plus-two-year agreement, among other things, provides increases in allowances and pay, and provides long-term labour stability for the airline," Chanin says. Kelowna Flightcraft is Canada's largest cargo airline and flies for Purolator and Canada Post, both components of CPGoC. The agreement provides an opportunity to open sections of the contract for negotiations in five years, while others will remain intact for the seven-year duration.

"We could not have gotten through this process without the support of ALPA staff," acknowledges Chanin. "In particular, our labour relations advisor, Bert Leger, and the staff of the Communications and Economic & Financial Analysis Departments kept our pilots informed and our Negotiating Committee focused on the job at hand."

And while negotiations were the primary focus for most of 2013, the MEC also continued to keep an eye on what changes the new Canadian flight-time/duty-

time rules will bring to their operations if those rules go into effect in 2014.

Transport Canada's Canadian Aviation Regulations Advisory Council (CARAC) Technical Committee publicized the proposals and recommendations contained in a 125-page report issued by the CARAC Flight Crew Fatigue Management Working Group in August 2012. That report advocates for modern, science-based fatigue rules that would apply to all pilots in Canada.

"The proposed rules are of great interest to the Kelowna pilots who primarily operate overnight, domestic, next-day delivery freight," says F/O Tim Wynn-Williams, the pilots' MEC vice chairman. "Our MEC has repeatedly engaged management to institute a fatigue risk management system; however, management is not willing to participate in meaningful discussions until the proposed rules come into effect." Of particular concern to the Kelowna pilots is whether the final rule contains a cargo "carveout," as is the case in the United States.

Staffing levels at Kelowna held steady during the year, says Wynn-Williams, with hiring conducted only to offset attrition due to retirements, pilots on long-term disability, and pilots who resigned to pursue careers elsewhere.

Kelowna Flightcraft transports 1,000,000 pounds of air freight nightly across Canada, and the pilot group hopes the newly ratified agreement provides the company the stability to maintain that status through the coming years. 

KFC at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1997 (became an ALPA-represented pilot group when CALPA merged with ALPA)

Number of pilots: 135

Headquarters: Kelowna, B.C.

Pilot bases: Hamilton, Ont.; Vancouver, B.C.; Halifax, N.S.; Thunder Bay, Ont.; Saskatoon, Sask.; Calgary, Alb.; and Kelowna, B.C.

Fleet: Boeing 727s, Convair 580s, and DC-10s



From left: Capt. Derek Porter, MEC chairman; F/O Tim Wynn-Williams, MEC vice chairman; Capt. Serge Fortier, MEC secretary-treasurer; and Negotiating Committee member F/O Kris Kanigan answer questions during the road show in Hamilton, Ont.

Mesa

New Airplanes, New Contract

By Lydia Jakub
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

As we move into 2014, Mesa is said to be one of the fastest-growing U.S. regional airlines in the industry. In 2013, all furloughed pilots were recalled, and more than 120 pilots were hired. An additional 350 pilots are expected to be hired over the next two years, as Mesa takes delivery of 30 new Embraer 175s for United Airlines. The increased number of airplanes and the opportunity Mesa has to extend its existing United Express fleet of 20 CRJ700s through 2019 are due, in large part, to the pilot group's efforts. Mesa is consistently ranked at the top for on-time performance by its code-share partners, and it's clear that they are taking notice of the pilots' efforts.

"It's a great time to be a Mesa pilot," says F/O Marcin Kolodziejczyk, chairman of the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC). "Every day, our crews prove why Mesa should maintain its current business and win new flying opportunities. We are the reason for Mesa's success. Now it's time for our pilots to see a return on our investment."

Contract negotiations began in March 2011. The parties have reached tentative agreements on 15 of the 27 sections. Of these, 12 sections were implemented in 2012 as part of a grievance settlement. They were all current book or better and included (1) an enhanced commuter policy; (2) a provision that pilots must be provided with a written statement of charges before meeting with

the company; and (3) the establishment of a Training Review Board. These improvements, while incremental and noneconomic, went into effect immediately so the pilots didn't have to wait to take advantage of these gains until a complete new agreement was finalized.

The remaining open contract sections are mostly related to economics—scheduling, benefits, and compensation. Although progress remains steady, there's still much work to be done to attain the necessary quality-of-life improvements and achieve the pilots' goal of a competitive contract that retains and attracts professional pilots.

In addition to negotiations, the MEC has maintained its focus on contract enforcement and has fewer than 20 open grievance cases. The success of the pilots' grievance program can largely be attributed to their grievance process, under which the Grievance Committee meets regularly with management to resolve issues quickly and efficiently before a formal grievance is filed. If an issue remains unresolved, the MEC has a robust and creative program to process grievances in a timely manner—grievance settlement meetings with senior management, grievance mediation meetings with a neutral mediator and, if needed, arbitration.

A new campaign, "Contract Enforcement Begins with You!," was launched in November 2013 to remind pilots how important it is to understand and enforce their contractual rights. Many of the MEC's regular communication

tools are being used to promote these ongoing efforts, including Facebook, Twitter, e-mails, and pilot-wide calls.

In December, the MEC toured pilot bases to talk with pilots directly about contract-enforcement efforts, as well as the status of negotiations and other issues affecting the industry.

Recognizing the necessity of having a unified voice to promote the airline piloting profession on Capitol Hill and elsewhere, the MEC has set out to educate pilots about ALPA's Political Action Committee (PAC) and increase participation. In just two months, the Mesa pilots have more than tripled their PAC participation rate.

Also, to encourage the next generation of pilots to become involved in the piloting career, the MEC is working closely with ALPA's Aviation Collegiate Education (ACE) Club at Embry-Riddle University in Prescott, Ariz. (See "Cleared to Dream," December 2013, page 30.)

"If we don't stand up and fight for our future now, we won't have a future to fight for," Kolodziejczyk says. "Mesa pilots understand this and have answered our call to action. We will continue working aggressively to protect and advance the careers of our pilots and remain prepared to address any challenge that may be ahead." 🌐



Pictured left to right are F/O Marcin Kolodziejczyk, Capt. Kenneth Mayfield, F/O Ahriel Greenfield, and F/O Jacob Clymo.

MAG at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1987

Number of pilots:
Approximately 800

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 74 cities, 32 states, Canada, and Mexico with 370 daily departures

Bases: Charlotte, N.C.; Chicago, Ill.; Honolulu, Hawaii; Phoenix, Ariz.; and Washington, D.C.

Headquarters: Phoenix, Ariz.

Fleet: 72 airplanes, including CRJ200s, CRJ700s, and CRJ900s; plus 30 EMB-175s over the next two years

NAA at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 2009

Number of pilots: 150

Pilot base: New York (JFK)

Headquarters: Peachtree City, Ga.

Operations: North American Airlines provides air transportation services throughout the world, operating both charter and scheduled service for the U.S. military, tour operators, government agencies, and sports teams, among others, and as an ACMI carrier for other scheduled airlines

Fleet: 5 B-767-300ERs



Capt. Nick Cercone, the North American pilots' Jumpseat Committee chairman.

North American Pilots Prove Resilient in Face of Uncertain Future

By **Barbara Gottshalk**
ALPA Lead
Communications Specialist

Basketball Hall of Famer Michael Jordan once said, "Obstacles don't have to stop you. If you run into a wall, don't turn around and give up. Figure out how to climb it, go through it, or work around it." In the past year, the pilots of North American Airlines have run into a few walls, but they haven't turned around and given up. Instead, with the support of ALPA, they have faced these challenges head on.

When Global Aviation Holdings, Inc., the parent company of North American Airlines and World Airways, came out of Chapter 11 in

February 2013, the pilot group was five months into implementing the concessionary contract they ratified in September 2012—a consensual agreement that was key to the company's successful emergence from bankruptcy.

Indeed, the pilots vowed to work closely with management to help the airline regain its financial viability, and their efforts have been instrumental in the progress the airline has made this past year. "In ratifying the new contract, it was important to us to enhance our relationship with management and work together to advance our mutual goals," says Capt. Rob Lewis, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. "We believe that engaging with management to discuss

additional operational savings and revenue-generating measures, review and resolve outstanding grievances, and identify and clarify problematic contract language is a great way to accomplish that," he adds. A provision for these meetings is included in the agreement.

To that end, the pilots' MEC approved two tentative letters of agreement (LOAs)—the Reserve Bypass LOA and the Mixed Flying Lines LOA—in December 2012. The MEC and management negotiated these agreements to benefit both parties by improving pilots' quality of life and providing the company with more flexibility. In February, the pilots ratified the Reserve Bypass LOA, which took effect on March 2. In April, the MEC reached a memorandum of understanding with management clarifying the recall-bypass procedures described in the pilots' contract. The pilot group also worked successfully with management to implement the Known Crewmember program in August.

One issue that the MEC focused on throughout 2013 was the determination of remedies for the pilots regarding a vacation pay arbitration award from 2012. Despite the process being put on hold due to the airline's bankruptcy, the MEC and Grievance Committee, along with staff in ALPA's Representation Department, worked diligently to quantify the damages and develop a schedule of owed vacation compensation. As a result, in November, ALPA was able to secure hundreds, and in some cases, thousands of dollars for

individual pilots as a remedy, totaling nearly \$176,000.

In mid-November, the pilots were presented with a new challenge: Global Aviation Holdings once again filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection, citing the weakness in worldwide freight markets coupled with the military's decision to immediately curtail its cargo expansion flying. In its announcement, Global indicated that it intends to continue operating during the reorganization process. ALPA has been appointed to the Unsecured Creditors Committee as one of three members and the only union on the committee.

In response to the bankruptcy filing, the MEC and ALPA staff mobilized immediately, marshaling the full resources of the Association and coordinating with the Association's outside bankruptcy counsel, Cohen, Weiss and Simon LLP, to assist and support the pilots as they face this latest challenge. "Based on the ALPA Economic & Financial Analysis Department's evaluation of the company's position, we believe that North American is performing profitably and roughly in accordance with projections. Nevertheless, we're preparing for any eventuality. With the resources and support from ALPA, we are doing everything possible to protect our contract and pilots' jobs at North American as we move through the bankruptcy process."

As 2014 progresses, it's clear the pilots are taking up Jordan's charge, determined to "figure out how to work around the obstacles" in front of them. 🌀

Piedmont

With New Agreement in Place, Pilots Look to the Future

By Jan W. Steenblik
Technical Editor

Last year, Piedmont pilots were almost three years into protracted negotiations for their next collective bargaining agreement. But on Feb. 1, 2013, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) Negotiating Committee reached a tentative agreement on a new five-year contract with management.

On March 22, the pilots ratified the new agreement. With nearly 90 percent of the eligible pilots voting, 78 percent voted in favor of the new collective bargaining agreement.

The new contract included a signing bonus, annual pay increases, and an agreement with US Airways mainline to provide career-progression opportunities for Piedmont pilots. The pilots also agreed to contribute more to their health care, bringing their contributions more in line with the rest of the U.S. airline industry.

Capt. Bruce Freedman, the pilots' MEC chairman, says, "This agreement not only rewards the pilots for their commitment to Piedmont Airlines, it also recognizes their contributions to US Airways, Piedmont's parent company. We're pleased that nearly four years of negotiations have been successfully concluded and that we have come away from the table with a contract that will enable the pilots to not only see short-term benefits in their paychecks but also long-term benefits in their careers."

The pilot group began negotiations in 2009, with both sides seeking assistance from

the National Mediation Board in 2011. The agreement was signed on April 1.

"Through the hard work of the Piedmont MEC Negotiating Committee and Piedmont management, with assistance from the National Mediation Board, we obtained a respectful and professional contract," Freedman notes. "As MEC chairman, my life was made much easier with the assistance of ALPA national, which was tremendous in supporting the Piedmont MEC Negotiating Committee. We had great support from the ALPA national officers, the Strike Preparedness Committee, and the Legal, Representation, Economic & Financial Analysis, and Communications Departments."

Like other U.S. airlines, Piedmont is now focusing on implementing the new FAR Part 117 flight- and duty-time limits and minimum rest requirements. Piedmont management has developed a training program for the pilot group that should help in the transition to the new rules. The MEC is heavily promoting the ALPA Part 117 smartphone app to the Piedmont pilots.

"Through various letters of agreement (LOA), discussions with management will allow our participation in planning for any improvements or changes that Part 117 may require," Freedman points out. "This could involve scheduling matters, crew base restructuring, or any other presently unforeseen circumstance. The future will keep all of us very busy, but that's nothing new."

One reason the MEC

and the pilot group remain busy is the rate of attrition within the pilot group. As pilots leave the airline and their MEC committee work, the MEC has been working to fill any open committee positions.

"We are in a constant state of pilot turnover," says Freedman, "partly due to the career-progression LOA that takes pilots to US Airways. Pilots also leave for other airlines and employers they feel provide more monetary or long-term career potential."

Moreover, because Piedmont has an aging fleet, US Airways management has expressed its desire to bring a new fleet to the regional. "We have only had preliminary talks, and more in-depth discussions are necessary to determine what management will be seeking from the pilot group," Freedman explains. "At least US Airways Group management is discussing the future of Piedmont. Those of us who have been here a while have waited a long time for some sort of commitment in that regard."

Piedmont Airlines is a wholly owned subsidiary of US Airways. Piedmont's 361 pilots fly nearly 440 daily departures to 55 cities in the eastern United States and Canada with a fleet of 44 Dash 8-100s and -300s. 



The sun sets over the tail of a Piedmont Dash 8.

PDT at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1984

Number of pilots: 361

Headquarters: Salisbury, Md.

Pilot bases: New Bern, N.C.; Charlottesville, Va.; Roanoke, Va.; Harrisburg, Pa.; and Salisbury, Md.

Fleet: 44 DHC-8s

PSA

Pilots Forge a New Future

By **Barbara Gottshalk**
ALPA Lead
Communications Specialist

PSA at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1988

Number of pilots: 530

Operations: PSA is a wholly owned subsidiary of US Airways Group. It operates 327 flights per day as US Airways Express, serving 65 airports in the U.S.

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

Headquarters: Dayton, Ohio

Fleet: 35 CRJ200s and 14 CRJ700s

Industry consolidation has become the “norm” in the U.S. airline industry. For a number of ALPA-represented pilot groups, especially those who fly for regional airlines, this new norm has had a profound effect on their jobs, their contracts, and their airlines. So when the pilots of PSA Airlines—a wholly owned subsidiary of US Airways Group—learned of the potential merger between US Airways and American Airlines, they had already begun preparing for all possible contingencies for their future.

The PSA Master Executive Council (MEC) started off 2013 by meeting to thoroughly review the group’s strategic plan. This evaluation included a review of all the MEC committees, their goals,

and tactics for accomplishing them. The MEC also hosted a series of pilot unity building events in each of their three domiciles to meet with pilots and receive feedback on various issues.

When the US Airways–American Airlines

merger was announced in February, the MEC pledged to take action to ensure that the pilots would be an integral part of the merged company. Section 6 negotia-

tions, which had dragged on for nearly four years, took on a new urgency, and by mid-February, the PSA Negotiating Committee had reached a tentative agreement with management. On March 27, the pilots ratified a new five-year contract with quality-of-life gains, pay increases, and opportunities for PSA pilots to progress to US Airways mainline. “With this agreement, we achieved much-needed improvements for our pilots, while also creating opportunities to help secure a competitive position for PSA well into the future,” says Capt. Jesse Coeling, the pilots’ MEC chairman.

With an April 1 effective date, the pilot group leaders began contract implementation, educating pilots about the new provisions and the dates they would go into effect. Meanwhile, the pilot group was dealt a serious blow when PSA Vice President of Flight Operations Mark Zweidinger passed away unexpectedly. The pilots had an excellent relationship with him, and his passing affected the pilot group deeply. Still, contract enforcement continued. In addition, the MEC, which actively promotes and supports pilots involvement on MEC and ALPA, International committees, formed a Legislative Affairs Committee and launched an ALPA-PAC drive to increase pilot participation.

In July, the Negotiating Committee, along with representatives from PSA and US Airways management, discussed placement of additional large jets at PSA. Talks continued through the summer and early fall, and on

September 27—six months to the day after they ratified their new contract—PSA pilots ratified agreements that guarantee the placement of a minimum of 30 large regional jets on the PSA operating certificate.

“These new agreements between the pilots, PSA, and US Airways provide PSA pilots with guaranteed seniority-based interviews and hiring at US Airways and the new American Airlines for the next 10 years. We also secured greater job security during that period,” Coeling explains. In exchange, the pilots agreed to the gradual phaseout of high-longevity provisions in the current agreement and small changes to benefits.

Acknowledging that the decision was not an easy one for the pilots or for the MEC, Coeling says, “The MEC thoroughly evaluated the current state of the industry—especially the regional sector—as well as economic and hiring forecasts for the near and long terms, taking into consideration the demographics of the pilot group. We also took a hard look at the challenges facing wholly owned airlines like PSA. Ultimately, we concluded that it was in our pilots’ best interests—now, and in the future—to accept the agreement and recommend that PSA pilots vote in favor of it.”

As the pilots forge their new future, they have established an infrastructure that maintains the current MEC leaders for another two years and solidifies their robust network of pilot committees, ensuring that they are well prepared for the year ahead. 



F/O Costas Sivyllis is a member of ALPA's Education Committee.

Spirit

Pilots, Airline See 'Astounding' Growth

By Jen Lofquist
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

“We’re not the same airline we were five years ago,” says Capt. Chris Amongero, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. “We’re growing at an astounding rate, and it’s not slowing down.”

In 2014, Spirit Airlines, a self-described ultra-low-cost carrier, will have more than 860 pilots on the property and 53 airplanes. The pilot group that was once based in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.; Atlantic City, N.J.; and Detroit, Mich.; now has bases across the country.

Additionally, over the next two years, Spirit is expecting to have 20 more Airbuses delivered to the property and will hire more than 400 pilots. With the implementation of the 2010 pilot contract, Spirit has become an attractive employer. In 2013, the pilots who were on the property in 2010 became outnumbered by those who weren’t. Each month, new-hire classes are filled, and pilot volunteers work hard to educate the new hires about ALPA and being a Spirit pilot.

“It’s not easy to keep up with the influx of pilots,” adds Amongero. “But we know that without contract education, there simply can’t be contract compliance. We have to provide the resources to our new pilots so that they can quickly learn the ins and outs of our contract. The MEC keeps an impressive stack of contracts on hand at all times just to meet the demand. And we are always looking for

new ways to reach the newest pilots on the property. It’s challenging, but a challenge that must be met.”

Due to the growth of the airline and the pilot group, the MEC has developed different strategies to work with management. Soon after the 2010 contract was signed, the pilots went into strict enforcement mode as management failed to abide by the new agreement. However, as the grievances piled up and arbitrations became delayed, both the pilot group and management looked for new ways to work together, establishing a more effective way to interact.

For instance, a number of grievances within the last few months have been resolved without the need for expensive, time-consuming arbitrations. Pilot and management discussions have sped up the process and resolved grievances that in the past would have gone to arbitration, allowing both parties to get back to the work of moving passengers.

“Although it’s a step in the right direction that the company and the pilots are working better together,” acknowledges Amongero, “it should be clear that when necessary we are more than willing to pursue a grievance as far as needed to reach a fair decision that respects our contract.”

This is especially important as the pilots’ contract amendable date inches ever closer. In 2015, the five-year agreement becomes open under Section 6. Preparations by the pilot group are well under way as they seek additional gains and to protect

what they already have. With their 2010 contract, the pilot group made impressive gains in salary and work rules, while keeping an almost unheard of provision—four days off between trips. This



Capt. Andy Nelson greets passengers on a flight from Portland, Ore., to Las Vegas, Nev. Fun fact: The couple had just gotten engaged on that flight.

allows Spirit pilots to have easier commutes and maintain a work/home balance that is rare in the industry. The pilots’ quality of life is something the group will be aggressively protecting at the bargaining table.

“We are aware what an anomaly our airline is,” notes Amongero. “We were once a small airline that flew to a handful of domestic destinations. Now we’re expanding our southern U.S.- and Latin American-based network and reaching across the country with new domiciles in Las Vegas, Nev.; Dallas, Tex.; and Chicago, Ill. Although this expansion has come with some growing pains, we are committed to working with the pilots already on the property and those who are coming to the airline to make Spirit both a financial success and a good company to work for.”

SPA at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1996

Number of pilots: 860

Headquarters: Miramar, Fla.

Pilot bases: Atlantic City, N.J.; Chicago, Ill.; Dallas, Tex.; Detroit, Mich.; Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.; and Las Vegas, Nev.

Fleet: 29 A319s, 22 A320s, and 2 A321s

Sun Country

Pilots Determined to Negotiate Contract Improvements

By **John Perkinson**
Staff Writer

The Sun Country pilots are prepared for whatever it takes to negotiate a new labor agreement. After several years of Section 6 negotiations, the new Sun Country owners and management still show little interest in completing an agreement

that results in compensation, benefits, and work rules commensurate with Sun Country pilot experience and training. And as yet, company offers are

not comparable to what pilot peers earn at other airlines.

"This pilot group continues to be highly unified and highly motivated," says Capt. Dennis Vanatta, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman, noting that "what progress we are making is due in large part to our pilots' solidarity and determination. Despite the duration of these negotiations, the pilots remain unwaveringly focused on their very reasonable goal of reaching parity with the other B-737 pilots in the U.S."

During 2013, the pilot negotiating team met with management under the guidance of a National Mediation Board mediator an average of a week per month, but any progress at the bargaining table has been made "in fits and starts," as Vanatta describes it. "Most of the

sections are either tentatively agreed to or should be very close to resolution at this point, and we are hoping to close up the nonmonetary open issues very soon. But the company hasn't shown any willingness to address the pilots' most important issues—pay and retirement," he says.

Sun Country's pay rates remain firmly at the bottom of the U.S. airline industry, despite the fact that Sun Country is profitable and growing. Vanatta notes that "all available financial data clearly show a company that is eminently profitable and has the ability to compensate its pilots on par with the rest of the industry." The airline has been steadily growing, adding airplanes and hiring pilots, and plans to continue hiring through the foreseeable future.

Sun Country's economic outlook wasn't always so rosy. Contract talks began while the airline was in bankruptcy. Rising fuel costs and an owner who was caught in an elaborate Ponzi scheme prompted the airline to file for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in April 2008. Sun Country remained in bankruptcy until February 2011 but has been profitable since then.

Despite the airline's positive financial changes, and previous concessions taken by the pilots to help the company through difficult times, labor relations with the new management continue to be less constructive than the pilots would like. Management contract compliance has been an ongoing concern, and the

MEC Grievance Committee continues to be busy handling pilot grievances.

The pilots' Flight Operations Quality Assurance (FOQA) program, a nonpunitive reporting system for collecting flight information used to improve operational safety, is another example of company noncompliance. The FOQA program was suspended several months ago due to the company violating the agreement. The pilots hope, however, that recent meetings will result in their FOQA program being reanimated soon. They point to the continuing operation of their Aviation Safety Action Program as a demonstration of what they can accomplish when pilots and management work together.

The MEC is seeking additional mediated negotiating sessions in 2014 to conclude these protracted talks and bring the pilots the collective bargaining agreement they deserve. However, Vanatta says that the pilots have already waited too long. "We're sitting at the bottom of the industry in terms of pay and retirement, and we're bound and determined to fix it with this contract." And with their continued unity and determination, the Sun Country pilots can make it happen.

Sun Country offers scheduled service mostly in the form of point-to-point flights from its Minneapolis, Minn., hub to its 32 destinations, including a number of seasonal destinations. The airline also provides ad hoc charter work with its fleet of B-737-700s and -800s. 



An evening shot of a Sun Country B-737 NG.

SCA at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1996

Founded: 1982

Number of pilots: 209

Pilot base: Minneapolis—St. Paul International Airport

Operations: Based in Mendota Heights, Minn., Sun Country flies scheduled service to 32 destinations. The airline also operates charter flights to numerous locations in the United States, Mexico, the Caribbean, and overseas. The airline also operates military charter flights and is a member of the U.S. Department of Defense's Civil Reserve Air Fleet.

Fleet: 17 B-737 NGs

Trans States

Pilots Enjoy Growth, Positive Change in 2013

By John Perkinson
Staff Writer

After a period of challenges following the economic downturn of 2008, the pilots of Trans States Airlines have witnessed positive change at their airline in recent years. This Embraer EMB-145 operator has experienced growth at a time when much of the 50-seat market remains sluggish, and the relationship between the pilots and management continues to improve.

"We have added seven planes to our fleet and are hiring new pilots every month," says Capt. Cliff Simmons, the pilots' Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman. "We are halfway through a four-year labor contract, and we're routinely communicating with the company to ensure that we address concerns that arise. Things aren't perfect, but there's a noticeable difference in the way we're doing business."

Management contract-compliance issues continue to surface, but the pilots have been quick to respond to these with notable success. "Management has been pretty good about working with us to solve problems before they become grievances," Simmons says.

For example, the pilots and management recently signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to clarify the pilots' trip cancellation policy negotiated in the last contract. Pilots had expressed concerns about inconsistent application of cancellation pay, so the MEC drafted the MOU to ensure that those affected receive the appropriate credit

and in a uniform manner.

One of the biggest challenges for Trans States flight operations has been preparing for the new Part 117 flight-time and duty-time (FT/DT) rules, slated to go into effect on Jan. 4, 2014. Trans States received an exemption for an early transition date of Dec. 29, 2013. Regarding the transition, the MEC has drafted a letter of agreement (LOA) that adds a long-call reserve option, which will provide some added schedule flexibility for both the pilots and management. The LOA amends the method of assigning trips to reserves, converting a reverse-seniority system into a "bucket" system that matches reserve day availability with trip length.

Pointing to the specifics of the rule change and new rest standards, Simmons says, "Making adjustments for FT/DT changes has also accelerated the company's hiring efforts." Trans States has hired more than 150 pilots in the last year and a half, and classes are currently planned through the first part of 2014.

Trans States, which operates United Express and US Airways Express flights, has been working on a pilot preferential bidding system, and the pilots have been meeting with the company periodically to discuss implementation. Once the two sides come to terms, they will need to incorporate the language in an LOA. However, this effort has been placed on a back burner while the airline concentrates on transitioning to the new FT/DT rules.

Trans States pilots continue to work closely with

their peers at other airlines through the ALPA Fee for Departure Committee and the US Airways Express Pilots Alliance. These groups provide a collaborative forum for pilots of similar operations to share what's happening at their airlines. Simmons stresses, "The information exchange and support are invaluable, regardless of whether we are in contract negotiations or not."

Looking ahead to 2015, the pilots' contract contains a provision to extend the amendable date by two years if Trans States acquires Mitsubishi regional jets by August of that year. Trans States Holdings, the airline's parent company, signed a deal with the Mitsubishi Aircraft Corporation several years ago for 100 next-generation Mitsubishi jets (50 orders, 50 options). However, the Japanese airframe manufacturer has faced some design and certification delays, and it remains to be seen if the company can meet this deadline.

Nonetheless, Trans States management's new willingness to communicate and its apparent interest in addressing concerns before they become larger problems have clearly facilitated a more positive work environment, and Trans States pilots are doing all that they can to make sure this trend continues.

Founded in 1982 as Resort Air, Trans States is the fifth-largest privately held regional airline in the United States. Trans States Airlines, Compass Airlines, and GoJet Airlines are owned by Trans States Holdings. 



An EMB-145 parked under a double rainbow at Chicago O'Hare International Airport.

PHOTO BY KATE SCHAEFER, TRANS STATES FLIGHT ATTENDANT

TSA at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 1994

Founded: 1982

Number of pilots: 352

Headquarters: Bridgeton, Mo.

Operations: Approximately 175 daily flights serving 39 cities as a United Express and a US Airways Express carrier

Pilot domiciles: St. Louis, Mo., and Dulles, Va.

Fleet: 30 EMB-145s

UAL at a Glance

Pilots Joined ALPA: 1932

Number of Pilots:

Approximately 12,500

Headquarters: Chicago, Ill.

Pilot Domiciles: Chicago, Ill.; Cleveland, Ohio; Denver, Colo.; Guam; Houston, Tex.; Los Angeles, Calif.; New York City; San Francisco, Calif.; Seattle, Wash.; and Washington Dulles, Va.

Fleet: A319s, A320s, B-737s, B-747s, B-757s, B-767s, B-777s, and B-787s

United

A New Beginning for the United MEC

By C. David Kelly
ALPA Senior
Communications Specialist

For 1,249 days, the pilots of United and Continental Airlines traveled a long and winding path toward forming a unified pilot group. On Oct. 3, 2013, after nearly three and a half years of negotiations, special meetings, ratification of a new United pilot agreement, and the release of the integrated seniority list, the new United Master Executive Council (MEC) was seated.

The merger of the two pilot groups represented more than just the combination of two distinct pilot cultures with strong and proud backgrounds. It signaled a new beginning for 12,500 United pilots who constitute nearly 25 percent of ALPA's members.

It's a pilot group that brings a wide variety of talent and airline industry knowledge to United Airlines—abilities and skill sets that United

management should draw on heavily and work with closely to benefit the airline and its employees in this challenging environment.

Mindful of the diverse

heritage and backgrounds of the legacy United and legacy Continental pilots, the United MEC immediately embraced the opportunities that stand before it.

"For us to capture all the synergies and strengths that our two pilot groups bring, we must move forward as one," says Capt. Jay Heppner, the pilots' MEC chairman, who was elected on October 3 and immediately began his term. "We owe it to the pilots we represent to combine the best facets of both pilot groups and focus on our collective futures as we build our new history together."

In its first three months, the United MEC already has filled MEC committee rosters, conducted a strategic planning session, hosted a leadership conference, and concluded its first regular week-long meeting in which it addressed many challenging and difficult issues. The MEC's work toward adopting a new policy manual that will guide the governing body is nearing completion.

This MEC has dedicated itself to working together during this period of integrating two proud cultures and histories. "Understanding that our strength lies in our solidarity, we welcome this challenge and stand ready to embark on this new order within our pilot group, our profession, and our union," Heppner says.

On the safety front, United Airlines pilots have long been trailblazers in the area of airline safety, and they continue that tradition in promoting security measures in the post-9/11 world. The United MEC is at the

forefront of advocating that secondary cockpit barriers be required on all airliners and advocated against permitting passengers to carry certain items aboard airplanes.

The United MEC and its Legislative Committee, working with aviation security advocate Ellen Saracini, whose husband, Capt. Victor Saracini, died aboard United Flight 175 when it was commandeered by hijackers on 9/11, were instrumental in introducing the Saracini Aviation Safety Act of 2013 in the U.S. House and Senate. This legislation would require all airlines to install secondary barriers to protect cockpits.

"The horror of 9/11 must never again be experienced, and it is incumbent upon all of us to work toward making sure our skies are as safe as possible," observes Heppner, who has worked tirelessly with F/O Heide Oberndorf, the MEC Legislative Committee chair; the MEC Legislative Committee; and ALPA's Governmental Affairs Department staff to communicate to members of Congress the importance of passing the Saracini Aviation Safety Act.

"Our country has become complacent on so many levels. We as pilots have to consider our own fate on aircraft and adopt best practices to never again allow another 9/11," Heppner says.

As this issue goes to press, the Saracini Aviation Safety Act, sponsored by Rep. Michael G. Fitzpatrick (R-Pa.) in the House and Sen. Robert P. Casey, Jr. (D-Pa.) in the Senate, is currently working its way through both chambers of Congress. 



PHOTO BY C. DAVID KELLY

Ellen Saracini was presented with her husband's 25-year ALPA pin by Capt. Jay Heppner, the United MEC chairman, during an MEC meeting in 2013. Capt. Victor Saracini lost his life on United Flight 175 on Sept. 11, 2001. Heppner thanked Saracini for her tireless efforts to improve airline security. She continues to work closely with the United MEC to advance on Capitol Hill the Saracini Aviation Safety Act of 2013, which would require secondary cockpit barriers on all airliners.

Wasaya

Pilots Encounter Mostly Clear Skies in 2013

By John Perkinson
Staff Writer

Despite some end-of-the-year turbulence, the pilots of Wasaya Airways managed to keep their labour relations “seat-belt sign off” for much of 2013. With good reason. The pilots negotiated a lucrative new labour agreement—their second since joining ALPA—using interest-based negotiations (IBN) for this latest round of talks. IBN requires both parties to provide ideas for resolving potential differences to help labour and management work toward cooperative solutions.

“Negotiations went a lot quicker and were more effective this time around,” says F/O James Harding, the pilots’ Master Executive Council (MEC) chairman, noting that the new agreement, which was ratified last April, “reflects the strong and cooperative relationship we have with our management, something we will continue to build upon moving forward.”

Negotiations concluded after a mere eight months, and the new contract provides for pay rate increases and an upgraded salary system. The deal also includes per diem and vacation allotment improvements as well as the pilots’ first sick-leave bank.

Wasaya provides a lifeline to 25 First Nation communities in Ontario, transporting necessary supplies for much of the year. So it’s no surprise that the airline maintains an “essential services” designation from the Canada Labour Code. Because a disruption of service could jeopardize

lives in these areas, the pilots and management sought a faster and more accommodating approach than the traditional proposal/counterproposal process used for most contract negotiations.

In addition to the new collective bargaining agreement, the cockpit crew ranks grew by more than 20 percent in 2013, increasing staffing to nearly 100 pilots. And for the first time since the airline began operations, the group had one of its own retire. On this momentous occasion, the Wasaya MEC worked with Red Lake Airport Manager Duane Riddel and Volunteer Fire Department Chief Walter Scarrow to give Capt. Ken Peddie the proper farewell, complete with the traditional water salute over the airplane on the ramp that particular Saturday night.

“You have to understand that we’re a relatively young company,” says Harding. “We’ve only been in operation since 1989. Although some pilots have opted to leave Wasaya, Ken is our first pilot to officially retire.”

However, several ground-related incidents in the fall of 2013 created an unforeseen financial challenge for the airline. These events required the airline to temporarily park a Beech 1900 and two Hawker Siddeleys at a time when the airline could ill afford an interruption in service.

Harding adds, “We’re also approaching our slow season when the demand for our services isn’t as great. This is the time of year when the winter roads go in, allowing ground vehicles to reach

some of the communities we serve the rest of the year. Ice roads are constructed so that fuel, groceries, and other needed goods can be trucked in.”

Removing the three aircraft from service, combined with the seasonal drop-off, compelled Wasaya to take action. Consequently, the airline returned several leased Pilatus PC-12s and announced that a limited number of pilots would need to be furloughed. The MEC has been investigating the use of voluntary leave and other options as a means to stop the furloughs; but as this issue goes to press, some number of furloughs appeared to be inevitable.

“This is a hard pill for our pilots to swallow,” says Harding. However, with the vital services that Wasaya provides and the cooperative and supportive relationship the group has with management, the pilots are confident that the airline will return to the growth and good fortune it experienced for most of 2013.

Wasaya Airways LP is solely owned by 12 of the First Nations communities it serves, and operates from hubs at Thunder Bay International Airport and Sioux Lookout Airport. The airline also offers charter and cargo service from Red Lake and Pickle Lake, Ont., and strictly charter service from Timmins, Ont. 

THE PILOTS OF
ALPA
2014

WSG at a Glance

Pilots joined ALPA: 2008

Founded: 1989

Number of pilots: 99

Hub: Thunder Bay, Ont.

Pilot domiciles: Thunder Bay, Ont.; Pickle Lake, Ont.; Sioux Lookout, Ont.; Timmins, Ont.; and Red Lake, Ont.

Fleet: 27 airplanes including Beech 1900Ds, Cessna C-208Bs, Hawker Siddeley HS-748s, Pilatus PC-12s, and Bombardier Dash 8s

Fun fact: In the Oji-Cree language, wasaya means “it is bright,” referring to the sun rising in the eastern sky



Capt. Ken Peddie's last flight on his retirement day.