

Adjustments



*Chris Beebe
MEC Chairman*

Since I've last written an article for the *US AIRWAVES*, our industry and our company (even US Airways' leadership) have undergone enormous changes. The past three months have taxed us emotionally, professionally, and psychologically. Never would I have believed that airplanes could be used for such destruction. Never had I expected to see a national groundstop that lasted for days. It is amazing what had seemed inconceivable to us, as pilots and as citizens, just this past August.

Commercial aviation has undergone so many sweeping changes in the past three months that it's now an even more dynamic and scrutinized industry than before. From the tragedy of September 11 have come some much-needed aviation transformations: strengthened cockpit doors, better screening procedures, and new enforced security measures. ALPA had championed these changes decades before, but they were either brushed aside because of finances or were slowed down by red tape. Now that some of these sought-after changes have been quickly implemented, pilots are becoming accustomed to a different work world, where security pat-downs are the norm.

As these new procedures were being implemented, a lot of brainstorming ensued on how to improve safety and security. ALPA's voice is right there, as ALPA President Duane Woerth is a member of a DOT task force that deals with security issues. This is a welcome arrangement, as our expertise in this area can be used to create programs that will improve upon aviation security.

Other, much less favorable changes include the layoffs of over 100,000 airline workers announced for the aviation sector in 2001-2002, including the scheduled furloughs of 1,341 US Airways pilots.

With Rakesh Gangwal's sudden departure, we are left with questions about our future

under Stephen Wolf's leadership. Right now, I will reserve judgment on what this change means for the unions of this airline. It will soon become obvious if Mr. Wolf wants to reach out to the unions and really work out ways to begin solving our airline's problems together. Too often, senior management has treated employees like troublesome costs, instead of partners in the operation of, and important assets to, US Airways. US Airways can send out press release after message after announcement about our professionalism towards and loyalty to our company, but those are just words. We need to see positive, sincere, and realistic efforts made on management's part to work with us.

Grievances

We've had a raft of grievances filed to counter the Company's actions since September 11. The expedited Contractual Violations MEC grievance (force majeure) seeks relief from management's intent, as indicated through Permanent Bid 01-05a, to violate numerous provisions of the US Airways Pilots' Working Agreement, including but not limited to provisions regarding Furlough Protection, Minimum Block Hours, and Minimum Captains. The grievance is scheduled to be heard on December 17.

The Cancelled Flight Segments grievance, which sought pay protection for the Company's improper cancellation of numerous flight segments in advance of the departure dates, was heard on October 17 and denied almost immediately.

The Vacation Bid grievance was also heard and denied very quickly. This grievance was filed because after the 2002 vacation bid announcement had been posted and closed, the Company improperly released a revised permanent bid announcement. This held up the vacation bid award until the new permanent bid could be processed in order to award vacations

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based upon the next permanent bid. ALPA believes that the Company must award 2002 vacations based upon the information available to each pilot on the original closing date of September 19.

The denied grievances will be further pursued before an arbitrator. Take a look at Doug Mowery’s (PHL) grievance article in this issue of *US AIRWAVES* for more information.

Small jets

Here’s an overview of what has been happening with small jet negotiations at US Airways since 1999. The Company requested additional small jet authority in 1999, and that year ALPA and management negotiated and agreed to LOA 79, Interim Small Jet Agreement, which doubled US Airways’ small jet fleet. This LOA was then approved by membership ratification in April 2000. The agreement included a requirement to immediately begin negotiating a larger small jet agreement, which the Company disregarded when management became singularly focused on the proposed United/US Airways merger, which was announced in May 2000. Then, two days after the United merger was terminated in July 2001, US Airways demanded that the small jet issue be resolved without negotiations. The MEC, though disappointed by the Company’s sudden and unreasonable approach to the issue, agreed to consider small jets by authorizing negotiations with management on August 13, 2001. The MEC’s resolution sought to pursue the goals of job protections in exchange for the Company’s ability to utilize additional small jets in the US Airways system.

Since September 11, and senior management’s subsequent decision to furlough pilots, the Negotiating Committee developed two proposals in the past three months. The first was designed to prevent furloughs and help the airline after the terrorist attacks. We offered the Company pay cap reductions, a pilot-funded early retirement program, and training relief and had a proposal on the table for authorizing US Airways to use additional small jets under its code. The Company’s response was to reject our efforts and refuse to meet with us to begin discussions.

The second proposal delivered by the Negotiating Committee authorized the Company to operate additional small jets under its code, provided that US Airways pilots’ jobs are preserved. This, too, was rejected by the Company, followed by a refusal to meet with us to discuss it. After Mr. Gangwal’s departure, I told Mr.

Wolf that I wanted to discuss the proposal with him so that we could begin a dialogue between the Negotiating Committee and Human Resources. Mr. Wolf told me that he will only meet with the labor groups simultaneously so as to provide a consistent message to all of us. Since ALPA always had an open-door policy with Mr. Gangwal, I hope that Mr. Wolf will soon begin to use the same approach.

Legislative Affairs

The congressional relationships built by MEC Legislative Affairs Chairman Bill Turbett (PHL), MEC Vice Chairman Bill Pollock, and me during the merger approval process served to help us as we continued elicit support from our legislators regarding post-September 11 events.

Bill Turbett has worked tirelessly as our Legislative Affairs Committee chairman, scheduling meetings with dozens of congressmen and their staffers since taking over as this committee’s chairman in 2000, shortly after former chairman Bill Pollock was voted MEC vice chairman. He is being furloughed on January 2, and when that happens, this pilot group will lose one of its strongest, most tenacious labor proponents.

We also continue to work on Capitol Hill to get extended COBRA health care coverage for laid-off workers included into the economic stimulus package. As of Dec. 4, Republicans and Democrats agreed on procedures for negotiating a compromise economic stimulus bill. Please contact your elected representatives and ask them to vote for legislation that will include displaced workers’ aid.

Furlough benefits

At its fourth-quarter meeting continuation in PIT, the MEC unanimously voted to authorize the balloting of the membership, including sick and active members, on an assessment to pay for the medical/dental insurance premium for furloughed pilots. If this assessment is approved by the membership, it will be used to pay the benefit cost. The cost of the assessment will not exceed \$85 per month for all A330 pilots and Captains, and \$55 per month for First Officers, except A330 First Officers. These benefits would be available only to pilots not covered by other insurance and who have remained in good standing in the Association.

I urge all US Airways pilots, as do your elected reps, to vote in favor of this assessment authorization. The pilots of this airline have always voted during past furlough periods to



pay for these premiums, and with health care costs rising, it is imperative to continue providing furloughees with this essential service.

ALPA budget reduction

After September 11, the dues revenue for each ALPA airline was recalculated based on the airlines' announced intent to reduce operations and furlough staff. The resulting reductions have affected ALPA International's budget, and consequently, the budgets of our MEC and LECs. The MEC spent a portion of the fourth-quarter meeting reviewing each committee's and department's funds to balance the budget. One cost-saving step that the MEC already had approved at the third-quarter meeting was to designate that all 2002 MEC meetings be scheduled in PIT. This change will also cut staff travel and equipment shipping costs, which can be considerable for meetings that are called at a moment's notice.

Adjustments

In just two years, we've gone from striving to become a world-class global carrier of choice,

to being considered by our management as just a carrier of choice, to facing the furlough of 1,341 of our pilots. Our mark is made by how we adjust to the changes that our airline has experienced and continues to experience. We are expected to go to our jobs every day and fly our passengers safely to their destinations, through every situation. As a pilot group, we have done that. Through Company/ALPA discussions, the creative scheduling practices that we endure, and the new, post-September 11 environment, we've proven ourselves to be an exceptional pilot group that can take everything that is handed (or thrown) to us.

Amid all of these changes, we have demonstrated as professionals that our responsibility to passenger safety remains as strong as ever. Our commitment to safety must always continue to be our first priority.

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