

What Is ALPA Doing for Me?



Chris Beebe
MEC Chairman

I am writing this *US AIRWAVES* article before the ballots have been counted for the Restructuring TA, so I don't yet know the results. I do know that the results will not change what ALPA is about or what ALPA does for you, and what a unified pilot group can do for ALPA. The outcome, whatever it is, will still prove that ALPA's representation and support is vital to our profession, even in the most uncertain of times.

During the last decade, the uneven events at US Airways—furloughs, near-bankruptcy, new management, brief profitability, more furloughs, again being near bankruptcy—have been hard on all employees, but especially on the pilots. Two years after all of our furloughed pilots were finally recalled, new pilots were hired, and we started moving up the seniority list, the downward cycle started again.

During the good, relatively stable times, pilots often ask me what ALPA is doing for them. During the bad times, when the industry or our company is unstable, pilots *demand* to know what ALPA is doing for them. No matter your position on the seniority list, or the equipment you fly, or your view of ALPA's or the Company's performance, your union is working for each and every one of you. This is especially true during our uncertain times, and we've had quite a few since I became MEC chairman. This industry, in fact, has never been truly stable, which is one of the reasons why our union is so strong—that strength is needed, time and time again, to defend our profession. During these unstable times, ALPA works even harder to protect its pilots.

For instance, when the proposed United/US Airways merger was announced, the US Airways MEC immediately began planning for the possibility of the merger's approval. A Merger Committee was formed, merger counsel was hired, and information on job security and seniority issues was developed and used to help gain the most favorable conditions available to our pilot group. Since United and US Airways were both ALPA carriers, a process was already put in place for merging both pilot seniority lists if the merger would have indeed gone through. The merger wasn't approved, but this whole experience highlighted the fact that ALPA didn't have any representation on the US Airways Board of Directors. In the current restructuring TA, an ALPA voting board member has been established to ensure more protection and a better opportunity to be more involved with the Company that we've been asked to "save" numerous times.

Shortly afterwards, the events of September 11 hit US Airways, and the whole industry, hard. ALPA immediately became involved, participating in government task forces to improve the safety and security of our skies. ALPA, in fact, has been involved in airport and airplane security matters for decades. Soon after September 11, ALPA called for the voluntary arming of airline pilots, and has made tremendous progress in Congress on this initiative, with a bill calling for the selective arming of pilots passing the House of Representatives. A similar bill is now before the Senate, and ALPA's Legislative Affairs Committee is working on Capitol Hill to help ensure its passage by the full Senate.

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At US Airways, management began furloughing the first of 11,000 employees soon after September 11. Remember, ALPA and ALPA’s policies do not furlough pilots. The Company does. Sometimes pilots fail to recognize the difference between their employer and their union. When it comes to events like this, the Company bases its decisions on its balance sheets, while ALPA works to preserve job security and career longevity. Our objectives, especially during these times, can be very different. When the Company announced that it was going to start furloughing pilots, ALPA immediately began setting up financial, insurance, and job-service support systems, and our pilots voted to cover the furloughed pilots’ insurance premiums.

During this time, the Negotiating Committee held weekly conference calls with the negotiating committees of other ALPA carriers. This was an excellent way for the MEC to be updated on what actions other airlines were taking in

response to the September 11 attacks, and also to share what the committees of the other ALPA airlines were proposing to their managements in an effort to decrease furloughs and restore capacity.

As we await what the future has in store for the Company and for our pilot group, I want to assure you that ALPA will work to provide every pilot with job protections and placement, and fair representation. The pilots have borne the brunt of our company’s and our industry’s troubles and mistakes. ALPA is here to make sure the bad times are a little easier to bear, and to ensure that we also share in our company’s and industry’s good times. No matter the outcome, ALPA is still here to protect our rights and privileges, our safety at work, our careers, and our livelihoods.



YOUR UNION NEEDS

YOU

Here’s your opportunity to serve your fellow pilots as:

- **International Specialist for Central Scheduling Committee—**

The Scheduling Committee is looking for pilots interested in the position of an Int’l Specialist. Please contact Central Scheduling Committee Chairman Steve Smyser at the MEC office with interest in this position.

- **Media Spokespersons—**

The Communications Committee is looking for pilots who live in CLT, PHL, PIT and DCA and are interested in becoming media spokespersons. If you are interested in this position, please contact MEC Communications Committee Chairman Roy Freundlich at the MEC office.

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