

Remembering Our Mission



By Capt. John Prater, ALPA President



Many pilots I know like to tick items off a to-do list. It stems from the fact that checklists define almost every move in our professional lives. Or perhaps it has to do with our “Type A” personalities. Whatever the reason, this entire issue of *Air Line Pilot* is dedicated to showing you how, together, ALPA pilots checked off the initiatives outlined in

this union’s strategic plan, and we’ve seen some outstanding results. I am proud to show you the progress we’ve made in just one year since your representatives ratified our strategic plan (see “In the Name of Progress: ALPA’s Strategic Plan Update,” page 14).

It’s equally important, however, that you realize we didn’t achieve these initiatives alone. Having just returned with a renewed spirit from the AFL-CIO convention, I can tell you that ALPA is the only pilots union with the rallying support of millions of workers from all trades and walks of life. Make no mistake, brothers and sisters, we’ve made significant strides in our own profession due to our connections with the larger labor movement. Millions, speaking with one voice, are sending loud and clear messages directly to the leaders of our great countries.

We will continue to measure progress on our initiatives because it represents this union’s taking a step closer to our goal of building unity across all of our ranks. We’ve seen many examples over this past year of pilots’ taking collective action across pilot group lines, supporting each other at rallies and informational picketing events, even refusing to bargain if all pilot groups of a parent company are not at the table. Our unity speaks volumes; gone is the day when recalcitrant managements whipsaw the pilots of this union. We will stand shoulder to shoulder and ensure that every member pilot group, no matter how large or how small, gets the contract our pilots deserve.

ALPA also kept to our sole purpose—to serve our members’ needs. The strategic plan provided the framework we needed to stay focused, which proved to be crucially important during a year that stretched our resources to the max. It helped us make some tough decisions while not only maintaining but enhancing the unmatched products and services that ALPA pilots depend on. You’ll read about several of these updates in Committees 5 (Education/Public Relations/Communications) and 8 (Membership/Organizing).

Most of all, I want you to remember that we’ve checked off all these initiatives to support this union’s mission: to be

the ultimate guardian and defender of the rights, privileges, and safety of professional pilots. This year, perhaps more than in years past, ALPA provided *the* voice for the profession on many fronts: leading the airline industry into a new age of federal aviation regulations for flight- and duty-time rules; drawing attention to the state of the industry; and showing the public, the industry, and the government why everyone deserves highly trained, well-rested, fairly compensated pilots sitting at the controls.

I’m proud to say “ALPA did that!” and you should be, too, because it took all of us to complete our objectives, and it will take all of us to put new initiatives into our plan for the next year. At the upcoming Executive Board meeting, your union leaders will continue working on the initiatives

ALPA’s strategic plan has been *the* agenda item at every ALPA leadership meeting since the 2008 Board of Directors meeting because it’s that important. It’s not just another document collecting dust on the shelves in Washington, D.C.—it’s the compass that guides ALPA, the very conscience of the industry. And it’s working—for you, for our profession, for the labor movement, for a better tomorrow.

in the strategic plan. We will receive and accept reports on the progress made thus far, and iron out the initiatives and priorities for our future.

It’s been *the* agenda item at every ALPA leadership meeting since the 2008 Board of Directors meeting because it’s that important. It’s not just another document collecting dust on the shelves in Washington, D.C.—it’s the compass that guides ALPA, the very conscience of the industry. And it’s working—for you, for our profession, for the labor movement, for a better tomorrow. Together, thousands acting as one to protect all—“We Are ALPA” and we will succeed in our mission.

John Prater