

Everything Matters

Over the past 80 years, the airline pilot labor movement has faced many obstacles. The 24 “key men” who formed the Air Line Pilots Association, Int’l were labeled troublemakers and considered such a threat to their respective managements that they had to use code names and meet in



secret to avoid being terminated. Our union’s founders came from different airlines, but it didn’t take them long to realize that by banding together they could advance the profession.

In the early days, the pay was lousy, and to say that the working conditions were dangerous would be a gross understatement. Pilot pushing was the standard, and a pilot who erred on the side of safety (which literally meant living to fly another day) was labeled a malcontent and simply fired without recourse.

Fast-forward eight decades—2012. We have endured the shortsighted and poorly executed deregulation of our industry in 1978, suffered the attacks of 9/11, been a witness to or a victim of dozens of bankruptcies, and participated in court restructurings. Let’s not also forget the consolidation that we find ourselves in right now.

The year has just begun, and your union continues to move forward on a number of strategic priorities. We have a full agenda that includes some daunting challenges, but I’m excited and energized about the work that we, collectively, are undertaking. We—the members and staff of the Air Line Pilots Association, Int’l—are leading a revitalized labor movement in the airline industry to hurdle these obstacles and capitalize on the opportunities before us. ALPA brings to this movement focus, determination, and a strong, unified voice for all airline pilots in the United States and Canada.

Several fundamentals guide us on the job. I’d like to highlight two of them: 1) While we follow a flight plan, we must be able to adapt to any given situation whether it’s external or internal, and 2) Everything matters—weather, destination, the passengers and our fellow crewmembers, our training, and our individual approaches to our job. These two principles are also central to our successfully carrying out all of our strategic union initiatives today and in the future.

While ALPA continues to pursue high standards for safety, pay, and working conditions, the complexity of these issues has increased significantly and new ones have arisen. Some of our current obstacles include overintrusive government regulations and taxation, oil price volatility and speculation, and the structure of what can best be described as a hypercompetitive international marketplace. These issues might seem like “company issues,” but in reality they are pilot issues.

Here’s why: At the end of the day, the careers and futures of airline pilots are inextricably tied to the airlines they work for. Unlike employees in other fields, airline pilots not only work for an airline, their livelihoods are often tied to that airline. In essence, we are the airline. And as such, it is ALPA’s responsibility to not only be aware of potential issues and pitfalls, but also to be completely engaged in the process to positively affect any aspect of our members’ careers.

So let’s take a broad look at some of our initiatives for this year.



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2012 Initiatives

- Significant support for contract negotiations
- FT/DT for all
- FAA reauthorization bill with complete funding for NextGen programs
- Reduce burden of airline taxes
- Reform aviation financing at Ex-Im Bank
- Connecting with members to support their goals

More to come in future Issues of Air Line Pilot.

More than 15 ALPA pilot groups are in **negotiations** in 2012. Several **mergers**—specifically United-Continental and Atlantic Southeast-ExpressJet—require extraordinary support and commitment by all involved to achieve successful joint collective bargaining agreements. Making sure that these mergers go smoothly is a key priority for me and the Association. Another two of our largest pilot groups—Delta and FedEx Express—are scheduled to enter Section 6 negotiations this year and early next year. In addition, American Eagle, ALPA's sixth largest pilot group, will be negotiating as its airline goes through Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings. Significant financial and professional resources are available to all ALPA pilot groups as they work through the bargaining process.

Safety has always been a cornerstone of ALPA. Today, we continue to advocate for NextGen funding and implementation, consistent international standards for pilot training, safe transportation of hazardous materials, mandatory Safety Management Systems, and Fatigue Risk Management Systems.

This past December, ALPA scored a major victory when the U.S. government finally published a final rule on flight-time/duty-time regulations that will implement much-needed and long-awaited safety improvements over the next two years for passenger airlines. The new rule is a significant improvement over the antiquated rules established three decades ago. However, to our utter dismay, cargo operations were not included in the new fatigue rule—a reprehensible omission. Since its inception, ALPA has advocated for One Level of Safety for the simple reason that fatigue affects all pilots, regardless of what they fly or who they fly for. ALPA is working diligently to pursue every sensible opportunity **to amend the flight-time/duty-time rules to include cargo pilots.**

From an economic perspective, our industry continues to be **heavily regulated and overtaxed** in what is supposed to be a “deregulated” environment. Today, the airline industry leads all others in America with 17 unique federal taxes and fees. For instance, if you spend \$500 on an airplane ticket, more than \$100 of it will be funneled to the federal government in the form of fees and taxes. ALPA is working to educate the government on how actions like these cripple our economy by discouraging people from flying in the United States.

ALPA's pilots, and the airlines they work for, can compete aggressively with any carrier, anywhere in the world—when the playing field is level. But we are working on a playing field that is tilted against us. ALPA recently joined with Airlines for America (formerly the ATA) in a lawsuit challenging the Export-Import (Ex-Im) Bank's proposed financing of several B-787s and -777s destined for Air India. If allowed to proceed, the potential long-term impact of the proposed financing could be simply this: our flying may be siphoned to foreign pilots with the support of U.S. tax dollars. In the very near future, ALPA will unveil

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its proposal **for leveling the playing field**, which will include a call for Congress to require transparency and job impact studies in connection with the Ex-Im Bank's financing decisions.

As you read through the pilot group profiles in this issue, you'll be amazed at the hard work and commitment of our members and the aggressive goals set forth for this year. In order to ensure success, I've asked for an internal check on our approach to member support, involvement, and communications. Therefore, get ready to participate in more polling and surveys so that we can hear from *you* what *you* need from your union.

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When the Board of Directors meets this October, we will assess our progress in carrying out the Association's strategic plan; evaluate the current and future airline industry environment; fine-tune our goals, objectives, and tactics; and recalibrate our plan as necessary to accomplish our mission.

It remains our goal to maintain our role as the leading voice of U.S. and Canadian airline pilots. And we must engage fully with industry, the government, and the financial community to ensure that immediate and aggressive action is taken to establish a roadmap for success for our industry and, more to the point, for the more than 53,000 members of the Air Line Pilots Association.



Capt. Lee Moak, ALPA President