

Everything Matters

On August 20, I was honored to attend the memorial service to commemorate the tragic First Air Flight 6560 accident that took place one year ago. It was both humbling and sobering to be in the presence of the friends and family who were affected by this event. The harsh reality of how fragile



life is showed on their faces. They are a tight-knit community, and the services our ALPA members provide connect the uppermost realms of northern Canada to the rest of the world.

And today, as we go to press, this country is just weeks away from the 11th anniversary of the horrific events of Sept. 11, 2001—an event that reshaped the world we live in. Each

anniversary that passes is a reminder that the unexpected can happen. In our line of work, we remain focused and diligent, always looking for ways to mitigate the potential risks that come with flying.

Yes, both anniversaries are gut-wrenching. Both have the potential to cause a downward spiral of emotion or spur one into action. In my case, and in the case of this union, taking action is the only recourse. Because even though this time of year evokes emotions of sadness and rage when remembering those who are no longer with us, we cannot lose sight that our mission is to protect our airline piloting profession—the current one that exists today, the one that has survived the catastrophic events of the last 11 years—and the one that we will leave behind for the future generations of airline pilots.

Our “protection” comes in several different forms: seeking the highest levels of safety when flying, which may come under attack from those who prefer regulatory leniency to gain financial productivity; guarding our quality of life from those who might eke out another annual bonus for operational efficiency; protecting our jobs from those who would prefer to outsource to countries not bound by workers’ rights.

In the story of David and Goliath, we are always David. We know that to gain any momentum or a so-called victory, every ounce of collective strength and energy must be funneled in the same direction.

This union’s success depends on its ability to build and maintain relationships with key people in our industry, including finding ways to work with our company executives to find solutions to issues that affect our careers. As I’ve said before, the taxes on our industry make success difficult to achieve; and most often, we bear the brunt of failed business plans.

Let’s keep in mind that our industry is very cyclical in nature. We witness a bankruptcy followed by a contract that reflects the airline’s financial state; the liquidation of an airline com-

pany that leads to searching for and gaining new employment; the tragic loss of fellow crewmembers. All of these are realities that demonstrate time and time again that this is a challenging and changing industry. But we can help shape the change.

The irony is that we chose this profession, and we have trained for this privilege. We have earned the right to fly. And we demonstrate our skills and talents on a daily basis. Though the news media don’t report “Sully”-type headlines in every paper or blog, such events occur frequently. We have our own stories of superior airmanship that prove we are all capable of being heroes.

Early last month, we celebrated several ALPA pilots who

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exhibited superior airmanship when faced with the unexpected. Our natural instincts, coupled with all those hours of recurrent training, on top of the mandated check rides, make the North American airline industry the safest mode of transportation in the world. Please look inside this issue to read more about these pilots and others who were honored during ALPA’s Air Safety Forum (see page 15).

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Donald Lee Moak
Capt. Lee Moak, ALPA President