

Stronger in 2014



“What doesn't kill you makes you...” We can all fill in the blank. Whether it was said by Friedrich Nietzsche, G. Gordon Liddy, or Kelly Clarkson, the fundamental principles of this saying resonate within us all.

And let's be honest, as airline pilots, we've all been through our own personal hell and back to continue or progress in our chosen profession.

But despite some of the challenges we've confronted in the past, I believe we can summarize in one sentence where we are today: The state of our union is strong.

And I'm confident we can summarize in one word where we want to be at the end of 2014: Stronger.

This year in particular offers an opportunity to become engaged with your local council representatives to let them know what you believe should be a priority for the profession and your union. Every two years, ALPA-elected representatives—the Board of Directors (BOD)—discuss, refine, and adjust the organization's strategic plan to best position the profession for success. The foundation for these priorities is a direct result of member feedback.

We must use our strength to overcome and prepare for the challenges we face. And we must be unyielding to break down the barriers that prevent our industry from surviving.

We recently launched ALPA's Save Our Skies public campaign after receiving 100 percent approval from our Executive Board ballot to support this enormous endeavor. The campaign kicked off with a print ad in *The Washington Post* and a radio ad exposing Norwegian Air International's (NAI) scheme to skirt labor laws and fly in and out of the United States. To learn more, read “Who Will Save Our Skies?” (see page 20) or visit sos.alpa.org.

The feedback has been encouraging from the public, news media, and legislators who continue to rally behind our cause to deny NAI. We must ask our BOD to do what is necessary to prevent our flying from being exported to airlines with unfair competitive advantages. This issue affects us all, not just those who fly international routes. Success in the international arena is essential if we are to have healthy domestic airlines.

As a stronger union, we must continue to pursue a bargaining agenda that justly rewards our members for their contributions to the success of their carriers.

We can have stable and mutually beneficial business relationships with managements that respect our Association. They must also share our interest in mutually constructive labor relations. They must reach equitable agreements and resolve disputes. We know that they may not always support our view and that we will not always agree easily, but we will do our part with manage-

ments to find solutions to genuine problems.

As for managements whose main desire is to be our adversary—who do not respect the principles of union representation, who do not wish to deal with issues or resolve disputes, who do not wish to make and honor agreements—we will be as strong as necessary and use our resources as required.

We have seen more than enough conflict. We don't seek it out, but we must be prepared and resolute in our cause if others seek it. As we plan for the future, let's consider these principles as our overarching strategy. Let's propose that our BOD support a progressive bargaining agenda.

Our bargaining agenda must include fair and equitable agreements for our fee-for-departure pilot groups. This segment of our industry is in the midst of another dynamic period. Many of our members in this segment have recently been through or are still engaged in mergers. Repeated changes of direction have resulted in difficult negotiations. Members who once knew stability are being forced to fight for their careers. Members are frustrated and dissatisfied with what their negotiators obtain, and some have sent their committees back to the table.

As a stronger union, you know that we face many challenges. We must use our resources more effectively to bring about greater membership support by best practices in every area. Our members must believe that their dues are no higher than necessary and being spent wisely to deliver first-class services.

We've successfully reorganized our staff structure to deliver services aligned with current challenges, opportunities, and member priorities. We're now engaged in examining ways to make our internal operations more effective and efficient in our IT, HR, and Finance Departments.

Similar to the dues rate reduction passed at the 2012 BOD meeting, we are progressing toward another dues rate reduction, from 1.90 percent to 1.85 percent. At our May Executive Board meeting, that body directed the Executive Council to construct a 2015 budget based on a 1.85 percent dues rate to determine its feasibility and report back in September.

Each of the 51,070 members of the Air Line Pilots Association, International has the ability—and responsibility—to shape the future of this union for success.

I believe that our chances are very good if we prepare, pull together, and focus our energy toward achieving our common goals. ALPA today is a powerful force for safeguarding the profession and enhancing our members' careers. But we can be stronger. And we must be stronger. 🌐

Capt. Lee Moak, ALPA President