

Northern Light

Northwest, Delta Announce Merger Plans

The recent announcement that Northwest Airlines and Delta Airlines are seeking to merge is just the latest chapter in the crisis-filled history of our beleaguered industry. We will need the solidarity of the membership if we are to have any success protecting our jobs, our contracts and our pensions. If this proposed merger actually does occur, we intend to remain the collective bargaining representative at the combined airline and will need your full support to accomplish that goal. Monitor the District 143 website, www.iam143.org as it will be continuously updated as the proposed merger develops.

District 143 Officer Election

The District 143 Officer Election will take place during the month of June during a regular Local Lodge meeting. To find the date, time and place of that meeting, please refer to the District 143 mailing you received in March 2008. If you did not receive one of these mailings, please contact your local lodge, or District 143, and give us your new/updated address information. We will be glad to get one out to you as quickly as possible. The information can also be obtained through our website at www.iam143.org.

Included in this mailing is an Absentee Ballot Request Form and the names and address to which these requests are to be directly mailed. Don't miss your chance to vote.

District 143's 47th Convention

District 143's 47th Convention is being held in San Diego, California, July 22-24, 2008. The Call for the election of delegates has been mailed to all local lodges. If you are interested in becoming a delegate and attending this year's conference, please contact your local lodge office.

Alaska Airlines Update

RSSA Lockout Case Arbitration Update

As of the writing of this article, District 143 has not been notified that a decision has been rendered in the May 13, 2005 Seattle Lockout case.

Recently, the grievance committees have asked me to address the remedy portion of the award. Apparently, there has been speculation in the breakrooms about how the work would be returned to the IAM should the Union prevail in the case.

The Company and Union agreed on the first day of the arbitration that the Arbitrator would only rule in favor of either the Company or the Union. That means, should the Union prevail, we must meet with the Company and figure out the process to reinstate the work to the Union. The parties would be under the jurisdiction of the arbitrator during this time of discussion.

All attempts to talk this through over time have not been successful. The Union, their consultants, lawyers, members, the IAM International staff, have all been utilized to date to keep the process going. We tried Federal Court and then—the lengthy arbitration process. We are ready to proceed to make the Seattle ramp a successful operation once the decision is rendered.

The case was completed August 27, 2007. All briefs were submitted by December 11, 2007. It is not unusual for such a case to take six months or more before a decision is rendered. This delay is NOT signification as to who will win. District 143 will publish the award when it arrives.

All District 143 officers, stewards, committees and I personally want to thank everyone for their patience, hope and commitment during this long drawn-out process. It is incredible to think that May 13, 2007 will be three years!

Arbitration

During the month of April, I will present two arbitrations for the COPS agreement. One is a contract dispute and the

other is a discharged CSA. General Chair Jackie Fay will be my board member.

Home Agent Program, Operations, etc.

Meetings were held April 1 and 2 in SEA with Company officials to discuss the Home Agent Program, cargo issues, operations and uniform matters. In attendant from the Company were Jeff Butler, Steve Jarvis, Lane Kemper and Betsy Bacon. Those in attendance from the Union were President/Directing General Chair Stephen M. Gordon, Jackie Fay, myself and Kiana Peacock.

A lengthy discussion was held to go over the cargo issues of GSRs and the written warnings the COPS and RSSA members have been issued. Kiana Peacock presented issues specific to the ANC cargo warehouse; however, similar events have occurred in SEA as well.

Cargo, Operations, CSAs, Ramp Agents—PLEASE verify your manifest, counts, freight, Gold Streak shipments!! Our duties all overlap as the aircraft is readied for departure. If the freight in front of you doesn't match your paperwork, **STOP** until it does.

Final Thoughts

For nine years I've joked with Matt Yerbic about when the first fish would arrive in the SEA warehouse. In April I would pick a date in early May. This year I had picked May 14 as the day that all hands need to be on deck, trained and ready to go. I can no longer joke with Matt about being properly staffed for that day because Matt has left ASA and moved on! Please join me in wishing Matt Yerbic the best of luck in his new job. Matt always listened and responded to the Union's requests or complaints. Even if he had to say "no," he gave me a good reason. I wish him success. I will miss his contributions to ASA and working with him on behalf of our members.

REMEMBER - You are the solution—Not the problem!—
General Chair Nan Otto

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Northwest Airlines Update

Great Career

Over the past twenty-five years the airline industry has been in turmoil for the passengers as well as the employees. Many of us at NWA have experienced wage concessions and uncertainty about our chosen profession during this time. The pressure and stress has also entered into our personal and family life. Living from paycheck-to-paycheck, working abnormal hours and wondering who to pay this month has put an enormous strain on marriages and personal relationships. Many marriages have not been able to survive the stress of no money and unusual work hours.

Very few rank-and-file employees work a 9-5 job, and what time zone one lives in dictates the shift start time. Flight schedules are based on time zones and how to get a passenger to a particular city for business. In the stations on the east coast, the a.m. start time is 4-5. Try spending time with family in the evening and get enough rest to work the following day. The other shifts, of course, mean you work at night and spend time with family on your days off. Yes, Tuesday and Wednesday for weekends are great days for family life. Kids are in school, the spouse is working a normal job and we, as airline employees, get to work overtime in order to buy food and pay the mortgage; that's assuming the house hasn't been repossessed. Great career!

I worked on a seven-man ramp crew a few years ago, and we were talking about our divorces and discovered that we had 14 divorces among us, with one guy who had never been divorced. Around this time, we began calling this AIDS or "Airline-Induced Divorce Syndrome." Why do we continue in this crazy career field? That could be because we take pride in our job and the fact that we helped build one of the largest airlines in the world. Doug, you probably work as many or more hours than we do, so give us a break and take care of us in the upcoming merger with DELTA.—*General Chair Sam Ellis*

BWIRR Closing

On March 31, 2008, some of the most dedicated and classiest employees turned the lights out and closed the door. These IAM members carried out their duties as Reservation Agents for NWA until the very end. We would like to thank these members for all of the years of faithful service to the IAM and NWA. I would like to personally THANK the BWI Grievance Committee and Stewards for enforcing the COFPS agreement to the bitter-end, and words cannot express my gratitude to Ruth Dorsty for assisting with the guidance of our members through a very difficult time.

What's Happening Now

I will be processing 2nd steps the week of April 14 for DTW, CMH, PHL and HIB.

Pay Attention

For the correct information, see your local union representatives for any answers to the DELTA/NWA rumors or visit the District website at www.iam143.org and click on "Merger Watch."—*General Chair Sharon Caldwell*

Revenue Leakage Revisited

FTEs—full-time equivalent man-hours or *fired, terminated, eliminated?*

Revenue Leakage (RL)—which resulted in dozens of terminations a few years ago has returned with a vengeance. You may remember District 143 writing about this. RL is essentially the Company's way of speeding up attrition to reduce costs. Discipline is soaring in Ground Ops and Res.

The Company has an attrition goal in every department. That goal is achieved by employees retiring, dying, quitting or being fired. Arguably, the Company can only control the last one. With fuel at \$112/gallon, carriers are doing anything to cut costs.

If the Company can replace an employee that is "topped out" in salary, vacation, SIK/OJI banks (if they do) with a new hire at starting levels, what do you think they'll do? Enforce every infraction with serious discipline.

RES/CSAs? RL could be something you've been doing for years without repercussions: upgrading passengers in advance, not collecting extra/excess luggage fees, improper use of Worldperk miles, anything in the name of what used to be called "customer service." STOP IT immediately unless you have a legitimate waiver or management approval! DO NOT let anyone use your sine or ask to use anyone else's. If caught doing something improper, you won't likely win the argument that someone used your sine.

ESEs? Several airports/carriers, in cooperation with the Feds, are utilizing hidden cameras to catch baggage pilfering. The collateral fallout also happens to catch sleeping, security breeches and EEO violations. Sadly, you better imagine yourself being filmed *anytime* you are on Company property.

Airline technology has advanced so far that it is simple for them to perform "audits" on an individual or a station by computer sine, revenue trends, upgrades, etc. One need not be ratted out (although there is way too much of that). Anyone's computer actions can easily be scrutinized for any time frame the Company wants. Please be advised that it isn't necessarily your local managers, although they are accountable if they discover something; it's all done in MSP. It's so easy now, and they're looking for "leakage."

If you or somebody you know is doing something that doesn't feel right, STOP! If an Elite asks for a "favor," ask yourself if it's worth your job. **NO WAIVER, NO FAVOR!**—*General Chair J Scott Peterson*

Air Wisconsin Update

UAL Express Ground Handling Agreement

On March 31, 2008, United Airlines signed and executed a ground handling agreement with Air Wisconsin Airlines Corporation. The new agreement preserves our current UAL stations and adds MYR, ORF, BHM, MBS and IAD ramp. Our UAL Station Agreements are as follows:

March 1, 2008-April 30, 2011—ATW, AZO, LIT, MSN, MYR, PMD, RSW

March 1, 2008-April 30, 2012—BHM, BIS, BMI, ELP, SPI, TVC, XNA

March 1, 2008-September 30, 2012—CWA, GRB, HPN, LNK, MBS, MKE, ORF, PIA, PWM, SBN, SGF, SYR

May 1, 2008-April 30, 2012—IAD

Ticketing Impropriety

Our members need to be aware, as employees who handle ground handling agreements with UAL & NWA, they are being scrutinized on the job by these carriers' Audit and Security Departments. They are looking for any improper waiver of ticketing rules; change of fees, reissue fees, add collects; change of departure/arrival cities; upgrades; excess and overweight luggage fees; missing funds/property; fees collected but not processed; waiver of additional fees but not PNR authorized; any compensation provided to a customer that exceeds the carriers' customer service policies without prior authorization.

Mileage Plus/World Perks—Silver/Gold/Platinum/Elite/Premier members—they all travel frequently and they know the rules. Make no changes unless the ticketing rules apply or the carrier authorizes you to waive the rules/fees/upgrades. Ticketing rules and upgrades apply to you, family members, and friends as well.

Our members provide quality service for the carriers we handle, but all our members should never forget...**Don't put your livelihood on the line for ANY passenger.**—*General Chair Paul Longden*