

# Northern Light

## Northwest Airlines Update

### Summer's End

Summer is coming to a close; and with its end, we will see the end of careers for many of our members. Early-out packages are being offered, and I believe that all requests will be honored over a period of time going into 2009, even in MSY where 50% of the full-time CSA classification have asked for the early out. The "gray book" employees in the cargo facilities will have their request for early out honored after the upcoming holiday season. To those of you leaving, I congratulate and wish you the best in your future endeavors. No future job will compare to the fun and excitement of the airline industry as it was before 2001.

Everyone remember to ask your local lodge for a withdrawal card; or if retiring, ask for a retirement card. You just might be looking for an IAM-represented job in the future, and that card will save you money when joining your new local lodge.

Everyone else should buckle their seat belts and be prepared for a rough ride, because the turbulence will be severe in the coming months.

Please go to [www.iam143.org](http://www.iam143.org), and send us your email address so we can send updates and keep you informed of the organizing and merger actions.—*General Chair Sam Ellis*

### NWA Outsource Chronicles

Since NWA filed for bankruptcy, they have outsourced over 60 locations. We have all heard the rumors about some of the locations that were performing poorly would be given back to the NWA employees. Well, put those rumors to rest. Effective in October 2008, BDL will become the first outsourced station that will be solely staffed by Delta and Delta Global services. Delta agents will be working above wing, and Delta Global Service will be handling the ramp.

The deal of NWA's being acquired by Delta has not been finalized yet, so why have they moved in on the NWA property in such a sneaky way? This kind of back-door action intensifies the uncertainty of how non-hub locations will be staffed after the acquisition. The picture is becoming clearer on how they will staff the NWA property.

"The new day at NWA" should say, "How can I screw you today at NWA?"

Now, more than ever, we need to work hard at keeping our union intact so they don't continue to make us victims of their plantation-style management.—*General Chair Jerry Cross*

### Here We Go—NWA Res Sales Division

Management of the NWA Res Division has decided to try and rewrite A.97 regarding stats for the Res. division. This action has generated over 50 grievances from IRRC, and there's more to come as they try to discipline for their "new stats" as imposed by the Company. A meeting is scheduled with Labor to discuss and resolve this issue. I will keep you posted.—*General Chair Sharon Caldwell*

### RSC

The latest class for the RSC office had approximately 25 graduates. We welcome our new brothers/sisters into the IAM. This latest class brings this new office to approximately 200 members. These members are starting out hitting the ground running. I had the pleasure to meet a few of them at the 1833 Union meeting last month in MSP. Great job, Brian and RSC grievance committee!

### DTW

Second steps were completed the week of August 4. We are awaiting response from the Company. Currently, 10-hour shifts are being discussed and voted upon for the next fall/winter bid.

### What's Happening In The Background?

The boxing match between the Company and all IAM members has begun. Censorship is alive and well at NWA (remember that "experience"?). The Company's ploy this week is to stifle information that is given to you. As you well know, "Knowledge is Power" if you are given the knowledge.

Don't allow anyone to censor information given to you. You have a right to know ALL of the information, not just what the companies (NWA/Delta) want you to hear. Fill out those Merger Watch and Pledge cards, and return them to your local representatives A.S.A.P. Don't allow censorship of information that you have the right to know. Stay strong—victory doesn't come to the swift, but to the consistent.—*General Chair Sharon Caldwell*

### Employee Benefits

Summer is almost over; and for the members of the NWA properties, it's time for open enrollment. With the cost of living on the rise and our members living paycheck to paycheck, now is not the time to save a few dollars by scrimping on your insurance.

As we get older, the job doesn't get easier. Our bodies just can't take the beating that our job duties require. For the members who work for NWA and are waiting for this company to take care of an injury or illness, don't hold your breath. This does not mean to run out and buy every policy out there. Take the time to investigate what is offered to you through your contract and supplemental insurance through the IAM.

Contractually, we are entitled to Group One and Group Two insurance at no cost to the employee. During open enrollment, you have the option to increase these two policies at a small cost to you. These policies cover life and disabilities. Take the time to pull these policies up under benefits on Radar. If you have any questions, ask your appropriate union representative or contact NWA Benefits. These decisions are up to you and your family. Take your time, do your homework, and help secure your future and your family's.—*Benefits Director Clay Parraghi*



# Alaska Airlines Update

## Centralized Operations

The Company and Union met on August 4-6, 2008 in Seattle, Washington to continue discussions on the Company's plan to centralize the weight-and-balance work and how this action would affect our members and the operation (various COPS contractual provisions have been cited for your convenience).

Present for the Company were Wayne Newton and Bob Hartnett, with visits from various members of the project team. Present for the Union were General Chairs Nan Otto and Jackie Fay.

An overview of what we discussed is as follows:

- a) Centralized Operations
- b) Departure Coordinator duties
- c) Timeline for centralized operations cut-over
- d) Labor Agreement provisions involved

As to the Operations Agent classification, the parties agreed that the Company can eliminate a job at a station or close a bid location. (Article 10, Vacancies Letter F1.2. page 41). As noted in previous Company communications, the Company has considered the "Centralized Operations" concept for the weight-and-balance functions for many years. The focus on cost savings, load plan accuracy and consistency is moving them in this direction.

## Departure Coordination

Today, CSAs, RSAs, and Station Agents (and in some cases Supervisors and vendors) are involved in the "coordination" of events that happen both above and below the wing prior to departure.

We recognize the need for continued coordination between the flight crews, gate agents, fuelers, ramp, cargo and dispatch.

With Centralized Operations, the coordination of above and below the wing responsibilities, safety and compliance issues, and all-turn timeline elements will be performed in the station by a "Departure Coordinator." This is considered a duty and will NOT be a classification of its own. It is but one of the shared duties Operations Agents, CSAs, RSAs and Station Agents currently perform, either as part of or the majority of their shift today.

## Timeline for the Centralized Operation Cut-Over

The transition to Centralized Operations will begin in October of 2008. This bid location will be in Seattle and be specifically located off airport adjacent to SOC (Flight Operations). This transition is forecasted to evolve over a seven (7) month period. The Central Operation Agent positions will be assigned as follows:

- Posted for bid September 22, 2008
- The bid will close October 15, 2008
- The awards will be posted the week of October 20, 2008 (Article 10.G, page 41-42).

Once the Central Operations Agent positions are awarded, each successful bidder will receive an effective assignment report date to the Central location. These dates will vary (Article 10.G, page 41). The Company will post a forecasted timeline for the elimination of the operation bid locations and approximate cut-over dates online.

NOTE: As it relates to vacation bidding in October (Article 13.C, page 54), you will bid your vacation at your current bid/station location. The newly established Operations Group in Seattle who report initially will bid amongst themselves in Seattle in January 2009 for their 2009 vacation periods. For those who report to the Seattle location later in 2009, Article 13.K will apply.

It should be noted that the Company is committed to working with individuals who report after January as it relates to their vacation preferences if at all possible.

As both the Company and Union are concerned about the possible movement of employees and the effect it may have on homes, families, and children's school issues, the affected Operations Agents will have weeks', and in some cases several months', notice about the awarding of their bid or their furlough.

The Operations Agents who are unsuccessful bidders or who choose not to bid to the Central Operations location will be furloughed (Article 10.F. 1,2, page 41). Full furlough entitlements will be afforded to these employees whose jobs will be eliminated (Article 10.A through F).

Should you choose to bump into the CSA or CSA Lead classification at an airport (as you hold seniority in those classifications), you may be eligible to perform the Departure Coordination duties. Interested individuals will be selected for the Departure Coordinator roles once the criteria for selection is defined.

In closing, the Company and Union are reconvening the week of August 17, 2008, to continue discussions of all the issues associated with the Departure Coordinator duties, Centralized Operations and all other matters involved in this conversion to Centralized Operations.—*General Chair Nan Otto*

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## Furloughs Are In Progress

After 9/11, the airlines took a real turn due to terrorism. Airline executives went to the Hill asking for relief for the carriers but none for the frontline worker. The result was many layoffs and the end of several carriers.

Alaska Airlines did not reduce staff after 9/11. They felt it was short term and the traveling public would come back after the TSAs handled the security issues.

The airlines are struggling again, this time due to fuel prices. All airlines are taking steps to cut their losses. Again, it is the worker who will be asked to help in reduction of hours or be furloughed all together.

Staff reductions have started by way of discharging those employees on probation and by offering part-time hours. Furloughs are in progress and will continue through the end of 2008 with constant monitoring.

Please review the COPS contract Articles 6, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 25. Article 10, Vacancies, talks about furloughs and has new language involving your shop steward. Please ask a shop steward for help. They will be able to assist with exploring all of your options.

Also, please check with your local lodge regarding your union dues while unemployed.

Wishing you all the best of luck.—*General Chair Jackie Fay*

### Safety First

Once again, I would like to remind everyone to be aware of your surroundings. The fast pace of the airline industry creates many hazards. Ergonomically, the heft of the bags and the confined spaces we work in, such as a/c bins, create unfriendly working conditions. Please use caution when lifting heavy bags—ask for assistance.

We have had people coached and leveled because they were injured while performing job tasks unassisted. Protect yourself and others—follow the rules and regulations set forth by your prospective air carrier. You have the right to work safe—exercise it!—*Safety and Health Director Roger Nohovig*