

## **NWA-AFA MEC Weekly Hotline Message January 30, 2009**

### ***AFA FLIGHT ATTENDANTS ON THE HILL – WE NEED YOUR HELP NOW!***

Flight Attendants representing Delta and Northwest Airlines were on Capitol Hill this week. Members of our Government Affairs Committee and the MEC met with Congressional officials of both Houses in order to urge the Obama Administration to appoint a worker-friendly National Mediation Board (NMB) as soon as possible. Visits to the Hill will continue next week in an effort to bring attention to the urgency of these appointments. With a truly worker-friendly NMB in place we can ensure a fair election when the time comes for the combined workgroup to make a decision about our collective future. It is imperative that you, the constituent, support our efforts. Only by hearing from you will this effort on the Hill be effective. Here is what you can do to help. If you haven't already done so, please go to [www.nwaafa.org/committees/govaffairs](http://www.nwaafa.org/committees/govaffairs) and click on the NMB SENATE Letter and the NMB HOUSE Letter and print them. Complete three letters, one for each of your Senators and one letter for your Representative. Don't forget to sign and add your address to the letters. You may drop the letters off at any union mailbox or mail them to the MEC office at 8011 34th Avenue South, Suite 220, Bloomington, MN 55425. You may of course mail them directly to your elected officials. To find your elected officials and their contact information go to [www.congress.org](http://www.congress.org). Another way to get your message across is to directly send a message to President Obama by going to [www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov). Please let the President know that you want and deserve a fair election and in order for this to happen, he needs to appoint a new National Mediation Board as soon as possible. Thank You!—  
Submitted by MEC Government Affairs Chair Albert Garcia

### ***DEPT OF LABOR AGREES WITH AFA-CWA REQUEST – FAs ARE ESSENTIAL EMPLOYEES***

Through the collective lobbying efforts of AFA-CWA and AFL-CIO, for the first time in more than thirty years flight attendants will be listed as essential transportation workers alongside that of pilots and air traffic controllers in the Department of Labor's Transportation and Material Moving Occupation section. Prior to AFA-CWA's formal comment and reclassification, flight attendants were listed under the category of personal care provider with the likes of animal trainer, hairdresser, funeral attendant, and fitness trainer. AFA-CWA has long disagreed with that classification and has worked very hard with the Department of Labor to ensure that flight attendants are recognized as having a crucial role in providing safety and security to our passengers. This monumental victory is an evolution that raises the profile of our profession to a higher level where government agencies and our passengers view us as the safety professionals that we truly are in this post-September 11 aviation world. For a full AFA International President's message please click [HERE](#) or go to [http://www.unionvoice.org/flighthattendant/notice-description.tcl?newsletter\\_id=22739050](http://www.unionvoice.org/flighthattendant/notice-description.tcl?newsletter_id=22739050)

### ***UNITED WE STAND - THANK YOU UNITED AIRLINES FLIGHT ATTENDANTS***

As our union brothers and sisters at United Airlines busily prepare for their contract negotiation, they are mindful of our efforts to preserve 60 years of collective bargaining rights with the Company. The United Master Executive Council, which includes fourteen local councils, recently wrote a letter to our NWA-AFA MEC president Kevin Griffin to express their support in our endeavor, and to echo the importance of unity and power of collective efforts in rebuilding and advancing the standards of our profession.

The United MEC stated in their letter that our AFA community is the largest flight attendant union in the world, in solidarity with flight attendants across our industry, we can enhance our bargaining power and achieve future success. "The fate of our Contracts, seniority and job security should never hinge on corporate decisions that are outside our control...and that's why we stand with you to help build our proud profession." The United MEC ended their letter by reiterating the commitment of

support from the United Airlines' MEC in any and all magnitude to fend off efforts to undermine our goals.

We appreciate and thank our colleagues at United Airlines for their letter of support for our campaign to retain union representation. To read the United Master Executive Council's letter in full, please click [HERE](#) or go to [http://www.nwaafa.org/docs/merger/support/unitedsupportJanuary\\_23\\_2009.pdf](http://www.nwaafa.org/docs/merger/support/unitedsupportJanuary_23_2009.pdf)

### **MESSAGE FROM YOUR MEC HOTEL COMMITTEE – LESSONS LEARNED FROM MUMBAI**

The recent Mumbai terrorist attacks have put the spotlight on the subject of hotel safety. According to the Conde Nast article "[Lessons Learned From Mumbai](#)," the threat of terrorism on luxury hotels worldwide has long been recognized, but the Mumbai incident brings short-term attention to those luxury hotels situated in high-threat capitals. A universal hotel security standard is difficult to enact because hotels are public spaces, and security measures of each hotel are left up to hotel management. Hotel location and local law enforcement capability are also factors that cause difficulties for implementing standardized international or federal hotel safety laws that go beyond basic fire and municipal codes. Also stated in the Conde Nast article, is the assertion that the safest properties are those located at the airport, followed by new luxury hotels or urban luxury hotels. Many big name luxury properties hire security consultants and tend to focus more on guest safety.

One of the articles also listed safety measures you should take before arriving at a hotel, when checking into a hotel, and during your stay at a hotel during an emergency as well as non-emergency in order to minimize safety risk. A few specific steps such as to avoid windows, double-lock your door and barricade it with heavy furniture, stuff wet towels under the door, or don't use cellphones to call loved ones because it might alert attackers to your presence are especially helpful to crew members who find themselves in an emergency situation while on a layover. For a complete list of hotel safety tips as well as the Conde Nast Traveler magazine article Lessons Learned From Mumbai, please go to <http://www.afahotels.org/>

### **TEMPORARY AMS CREW HOTEL MOVE**

Crew members working flights 46, MSP-AMS and flight 58, MEM-AMS, starting January 26, until February 13, will be relocating to an alternate hotel. From February 16, until the end of April 2009, all CRAF-flights will be relocating as well. Please refer to bid analysis or crew ACCESS for specific hotel information. MEC Hotel Committee encourages all of our flight attendants to continue their write-ups on every issue at our current AMS crew hotel. This recent move is proof that documentation works. Your MEC Hotel Committee appreciates and thanks all members who are working to help make a change to better the location and quality of our layover hotel in Amsterdam. Should you have questions or concerns or would like to contact your hotel committee, please go to <http://www.afahotels.org/>

### **MEC PRESIDENT'S LETTER ON EARLY OUT MEDICAL BENEFITS**

The enrollment deadline for the Early Out Program is February 11. Taking an early retirement option is a big commitment that is irrevocable, and because health care costs are a big part of the retirement decision, our union wants to ensure that all members have retirement benefit packages we know will be there in the future. Our NWA-AFA MEC president Kevin Griffin has sent a letter to Ed Bastian, President and CFO - Delta Air Lines, Inc.; CEO and President - NWA, Inc., to urge the Company to lock in the fifty percent (50%) subsidized retiree medical benefit as a guaranteed benefit under the company's Early Out Program. In his January 22 internal memorandum to employees regarding Retiree Medical Subsidy, Ed Bastian wrote that Delta will not eliminate fifty percent medical subsidy

of pre-65 retiree medical coverage for pre-merger Northwest employees who take advantage of the 55 point early out program.

Benefits mentioned in Delta's memo are used to entice employees to take the early out program, but are not guaranteed benefits. Our union wants to make sure these benefits will be there when early out retirees need them by making them available under the current NWA contract terms.

### ***CORRECTION - NO ALTERATION MAXIMUMS ON DELTA UNIFORM ALTERATIONS***

MEM President Shawn Fivecoat has been working with the Company regarding ongoing member and union concerns over the limits that NW has put on reimbursement for alterations for the new DL uniform. The uniforms are arriving and there is a document enclosed that gives directions for alterations. It names locations where we can go and advises that we can only spend a maximum of \$56.00. [Section 19](#) allows the Company to set a maximum on alterations, but upon further discussion and scrutiny this provision is NOT for new uniforms. Maximums can only be set for alterations required after weight gain, loss, etc. NW management has admitted their error, so please be advised that there is NO limit on the amount that can be spent on alterations to fit you properly in the new DL uniform. If you are curious, you can turn to page 19.3 of our contract and read the bottom paragraph beginning with; "The Company shall bear the cost of all alterations required to properly fit a Flight Attendant in a new uniform..." NW management will clarify their position and send out a notice soon. If you do not have an approved vendor in your area that will direct bill the company, please submit your receipts with a NW business expense form for reimbursement. Many thanks to MEM President Shawn Fivecoat and NW management for addressing this error promptly.

### ***LETTER TO THE EDITOR – WHEN WILL OUR UNION ELECTION TAKE PLACE?***

Ever since Delta management accused our union of "stalling" via company email, this doubt and question has spread through our consciousness. We understand impatience and the desire to act and we share it. Remember that we are flight attendants and we are working very hard to make our union election and integration happen quickly and on a fair playing field.

As you read above from SFO FA Albert Garcia, many of us were in Washington, D.C. this week lobbying the Senate and the White House for a new NMB appointment, so that we can have a fair election soon. However, there are 4,000 appointments for the Obama administration to accomplish. What we are trying very diligently to do is move this appointment up in queue NOW. We know we have President Obama's support based upon past correspondence from him, but we need action. Please take a moment to use the form letters on the MEC Government Affairs page to write to your Senators about this crucial appointment for our futures. We don't ask for favors, only for a fair NMB.

Please know and share with your flying partners that we will file a petition for Single Transportation System for flight attendants and for an election in the next few months, when we feel it is appropriate. Once we file, we lose any control over the timing and process. A new NMB is imperative for a fair vote – the National Mediation Board decides who is eligible to vote, when/how long we vote, and how we vote (yes/no ballot or 50% +1). It is very important who is on that 3-member board, because we want a fair shake this time around. The current NMB refused to even investigate over 100 interference charges from the May 2008 vote at Delta, if you'll recall. This has been the most anti-labor NMB in history, and the current NMB Chair Read Van De Water (and former top lobbyist for NWA) must be replaced immediately.

We ask that you trust us as your elected leaders and your union brothers and sisters, and be as patient as possible with the process. Try to ignore the strategic messages from management and others who do not want a legal voice for flight attendants at this new airline. Your union officials do

not want to wait any more than you do, but we know we have to be disciplined and steadfast now, more than ever. We don't ask you to love AFA, we ask for you to support collective bargaining and union representation for the future of our career. Anything you can do to help our efforts in your state campaign structure is greatly appreciated.— NWA MEC Vice President Janette Rook

## **RESERVE CENTRAL**

### *A-Days or Full-Time Reserve at the new Delta?*

This will be a negotiations/survey issue after we elect to keep union representation. All members will be surveyed about their preference for this and all other provisions in our joint contract. Contract opener surveys guide our negotiators. It very well may be that the majority will prefer A-Days.

### *What is the Union Doing About SILO?*

There used to be far more cases of down line rescheduling and scheduling/re-scheduling into days off (PDO and GDO). These violations, as well as a desire for greater predictability for staffing, pattern drops and pattern releases, are what led to the negotiation of SILO for Reserve Assignments. Systems like SILO have been negotiated at many airlines that have full-time Reserves. SILO is a new system and it requires a new level of understanding, but it is contractual. However, if there is a violation of our contract in regards to SILO assignments, please report it immediately to your [local council officers](#). In order to investigate any violations, it is important to make a copy of the open board before assignments are run and the Reserve Available list from ACCESS. Of course in a newly negotiated joint contract, a majority could decide we prefer A-Days and that would dramatically affect or eliminate SILO. Any suggestions for improvements to SILO, that can be accomplished contractually, are welcome. Please send your ideas to your [Local Council Officers](#) or to the [Scheduling Committee](#), so that we may bring them to the Company.