

NWA-AFA MEC Weekly Hotline Message March 27, 2009

MEC HOTLINE: (888) 3-NWA-AFA or www.nwaafa.org

PURPLE RIBBON CAMPAIGN: Pro-Delta, Pro-AFA www.deltaafa.org

INCREASE IN FAA INSPECTIONS AND QA AUDITS UNDERWAY

With the ongoing 'integration' aligning NW/DL and various changes in procedures, we can expect an increase in inspections by the FAA, particularly with upcoming 'cross fleetings'. Please be especially aware of minimum crew requirements and updated FA Manuals. Manual checks may also be conducted in the bases, so make sure you have all current bulletins and revisions.

Quality Assurance audits are also continuing. The company issued an update in October 2008 concerning these audits and a 'Hotline' message was also posted at the time. We have been assured that the audits (and results thereof) are not intended to be punitive - but (rather) an opportunity to focus on items which may present the basis for improvements and/or training initiatives. FA Managers can be contacted if you'd like to review or discuss the results of such audits.

Again, the audits are not intended to be 'punitive'; however, if willful acts of negligence are observed, these would be subject to disciplinary action. The Company has also stated that the QA auditors would not (necessarily) announce their presence onboard. Please alert your LEC officers and/or MEC Air Safety, Health & Security representation on any concerns as a result of either the FAA inspections or QA audits underway. -- Submitted by MEC ASHS Committee Chair Jeanne Elliott

WMU CONDUCTS PILOT/FLIGHT ATTENDANT SURVEY

Western Michigan University's College of Aviation is currently seeking pilots and flight attendants to participate in an online survey focused on effective crew communications and enhanced training. This survey uses research from a study completed by NASA in 1995, and updates the information to include all the changes in the airline industry that have taken place after the tragic events of September 11, 2001. This is a short survey and it will be available in various languages to solicit information from crew members from various airlines worldwide.

Northwest flight attendants are encouraged to participate. This anonymous online survey should take no more than ten to fifteen minutes and the participant can, at any time, skip any or all the question(s), or terminate the survey. Much of the survey seeks an individual assessment on issues such as the current state of pilot and flight attendant communication/training methods, fatigue issues, and potential use of wireless communications among crew members. Please go to <http://efm.pulseware.com.au/survey.asp?r=927083&vp=9AcACbcF95> and take this worthwhile survey. All surveys should be completed by May 9, 2009. The results will be published in May and should help with future training programs. Questions and concerns can be directed to Lori Brown, Head Researcher WMU, College of Aviation at <http://homepages.wmich.edu/~lbrown/>

MINNESOTA UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS UPDATE

Your AFA Government Affairs representatives have been working with lawmakers in Minnesota to change a statute that denies unemployment benefits to members based in MSP taking a voluntary leave such as the SLIP leaves that have recently been offered by the Company. We have met numerous times with lawmakers and were able to garner support from Minnesota State Senator Steve Murphy (MN-DFL) and Senator James Metzen (MN-DFL) who helped draft legislation that would change the state statute. Just this past Wednesday, March 25, the bill was discussed at a Senate hearing where there was no opposition to the bill. This is an encouraging sign giving us hope for the same positive response from the House. Once this legislation passes both the MN Senate and the

House it will then go to the Governor for his signature and the statute will be changed, allowing MSP based SLIP leave participants to apply for and be granted unemployment benefits. Unfortunately we cannot guarantee passage of this bill in time for those MSP based flight attendants that are considering the current SLIP leaves. However we urge all MSP based flight attendants that decide to take the SLIP leave to immediately apply for unemployment benefits with the state of Minnesota. For those of you that live in Minnesota, but are not based in MSP, you should apply for unemployment benefits where you work (based). As soon as we have any further information on the progress of this legislation we will let you know. -- Submitted by MEC Government Affairs Committee Chair Albert Garcia

AFA-CWA URGES U.S. SENATE TO CONFIRM NOMINATION OF NEW NMB APPOINTEE

On March 13 the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA-CWA) congratulated the Obama Administration for their appointment of Linda Puchala to the National Mediation Board (NMB). When confirmed, Puchala will replace current board member Ms. Read Van de Water, who is a hold-over appointment from the Bush Administration since July 2006. Over the past eight years, the NMB has repeatedly failed to fulfill its mission to promote collective bargaining and to protect the rights of workers who seek to join a union. Recognizing this failure, earlier this year Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA), joined by 80 Congressional leaders, sent a request to the White House seeking a swift appointment of a fair-minded replacement to this federal agency so important to our transportation systems. We look forward to working with Ms. Puchala to ensure that the National Mediation Board adheres to its mission of protecting employees' right to organize without interference or influence from the employers, and to fair oversight for our negotiations, should we vote to retain collective bargaining for the new Delta.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Q: Can it be stated, somewhere in a bulletin, about the wearing of AFA pins on our new Delta uniform? I have been wearing my AFA pin with pride along with my purple ribbon. I wear it in flight and was never told to take it off. Many crew members are not sure of the policy and need to know that it is okay to wear our AFA pins.--DTW Flight Attendant Charles Pankey

A: Many flight attendants are indeed uncertain about wearing a union insignia on the new Delta uniform since Company communications did not specify the union pin on the list of approved items that can be worn on our uniforms. As we undergo the DL/NW merger process, please know that Northwest flight attendants are still protected under our current contract which states in [Section 19](#) on page 19.6 that the union insignia may be worn on the uniform, and a flight attendant may remove his/her name bar when off the aircraft. Delta management even allows their flight attendant to wear an AFA pin if they wish, in recognition of the fact that nearly 40% of their work group voted for our union last May.

What's in a union pin? Our AFA union pin represents the unity of our blended tradition regardless of our past airline affiliation, culture, background, and seniority. Our current union insignia of an AFA pin and a purple ribbon symbolizes the coming together of two distinct airline cultures; pre-merger Northwest and Delta flight attendants in solidarity for a secure future as we work to continue our 60 plus year tradition of collective bargaining rights. Wearing a union insignia may be a small gesture, but it speaks volumes regarding our awareness of employee rights, and our desire to keep our ability to negotiate for industry leading pay and benefits working for the world's premier global airline. Wear your union pin in pride, in solidarity, for whatever the reason and motivation; please wear your union pin.

EO PARTICIPANTS MUST COMPLETE COBRA PAPERWORK

Flight attendants who are participating in the Early Out program *must* complete the retiree election form and COBRA paperwork in order to receive the three months Company paid medical insurance. This applies to all early out participants regardless of individual retirement age and eligibility. Generally, after an employee retires, his/her PAN will be processed by the NWA Benefits Department, and a

COBRA Election Form will be sent to the employee who must fill it out and elect to receive a continuation of the benefits. At that time, employees can start sending in payments until an alternate payment arrangement can be made. In the case of an Early Out participant who is at retirement age and has a March 31 separation date, he/she will have to complete both the retiree election form **and** the COBRA form and return the completed paperwork back to the Company. Individual contributions for coverage as a retiree will begin at the end of June for July or on the fourth month of coverage depending on the individual's separation date.

MORE ON AM/PM RESERVE

A reserve flight attendant who is awarded an AM/PM on-call period is required to be available by phone or pager contact only during the designated AM/PM period. He/she is automatically released each day at the end of the AM/PM period until the start of the next on-call period. Trip assignments will be made to patterns that report during an AM/PM on-call period. For example, if a reserve FA is on an AM period (0000-1159), the flight attendant can be assigned a pattern that reports up to 1159 only. If required by operation, an AM/PM on-call period can be extended to a full 24 hour on-call period by scheduling. At the point, a reserve flight attendant can then be contacted to cover an open position at 1200 or later.

A reserve flight attendant may preference patterns as usual. However, pattern preference requests will over-ride an on-call designation. For instance, if a reserve flight attendant is on-call during the AM period and enters a pattern preference for a layover in AMS. While the reserve flight attendant will not be assigned a pattern reporting after 1159, he/she can be awarded an AMS trip departing in the afternoon/evening if the flight attendant's pattern preference request is processed by scheduling. Please refer to [Section 7 Reserve](#), pages 7.4 and 7.5 of our contract to learn more about the AM/PM reserve option.

LOD FLIGHT ATTENDANT – CONTRIBUTE TO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

When passengers board the plane and the Language of Destination (LOD) flight attendant greets them in their native language, there is often a look of pleasant surprise. Many passengers have mentioned how delighted they are that there are flight attendants who speak their language and will be available to assist them throughout the flight.

The Language of Destination program has been up and running for more than half a year, and LOD flight attendants are there to assist both the passengers and their fellow crew members. They should make sure to introduce themselves to the crew at pre-flight briefings and let them know what language(s) they speak. On trans-Atlantic flights, LODs should make appropriate translations of in-flight announcements. If flying trans-Pacific, LODs need to ask the purser if he/she would like them to make safety/security related announcements. Since the purser is instructed to limit foreign language announcements especially on trans-Pacific flights as per company policy, there is no need to initiate any announcements unless they are requested to do so or in cases of emergency. Whether trans-Atlantic or trans-Pacific, LOD FAs should stick to company published foreign language announcements for consistency. LODs need to be on the lookout for all passengers – even those not sitting in their service zone of responsibility - who may benefit from their language skills, including those who might need special assistance filling out immigration and customs forms, or confused first time flyers and senior citizens.

In the next several months, as word spreads that Northwest Airlines has Language of Destination flight attendants on board, more passengers will benefit from the program. What our passengers won't realize is that even though a program was not advertised in the past, LOD flight attendants have always been there. It's only now being given the exposure that can be valued as an important part of customer satisfaction. -- Submitted by MEC LOD Committee Chair Jeffrey Ferrer

UNIONS CAN BE USED AS PAWNS IN BATTLE BETWEEN BUSINESS AND LABOR

David Macaray is a Los Angeles playwright and writer and was a former labor union representative. He has written an article that explains how workers have made mistakes by voting to decertify their union in order to attach themselves to another union in hopes that the new union will be able to negotiate better wages or benefits, or vote to decertify because the workers think they can do better by going it alone in negotiations only to find that they are not qualified to adequately handle the negotiations.

Mr. Macaray also mentions a tactic used by management to entice workers to take on issues in a friendly “workplace democracy” setting using volunteers for joint management-worker committees in order to marginalize the role of duly elected union officers. We have seen this tactic used in our company culture. Employee Involvement Team (EIT) and Conflict Resolution Process (CRP) are good programs conceptually, but they aim to bypass the union and circumvent the due process offered by contractually binding rights. Management knows that average workers are much easier to manipulate than hard-nosed union negotiators.

He goes on to discuss how management can have a profound effect on certain workers by portraying the union as fundamentally “negative”, by influencing those workers who are philosophically anti-union and are quick to criticize unions’ flaws. Stagnant wages have paralleled shrinking union membership since 1973 and have coincided with anti-union sentiment in this country. The final assessment of the article is that workers need to understand that businesses will do everything in their power to “hang onto their money”.

The article’s discussion of management-labor relations is relative to what we see taking place in our workplace. Management explores the human nature of *I can take care of myself or the other union is better*. We forget that unity is power and collective voices are always more powerful than an individual voice. When things aren’t working right we tend to look for greener pastures only to find that the grass is always greener over the septic tank. The fundamentals of management-labor relations do not change – the age old battle between profits and wages. Click [HERE](#) to read the entire article.

MEC MEETING AND ANNUAL AFA-CWA BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

AFA is governed by flight attendants, for flight attendants. To see for yourself how your union is governed please join us in Milwaukee for the Master Executive Council meeting from March 28 through March 30: http://nwaafa.org/docs/mec/MEC_Agenda_MAR_2009_2.pdf and the yearly AFA-CWA Board of Directors meeting : <http://nwaafa.org/docs/BOD/BOD%20DOC019.PDF>. For the full text of the BOD agenda items in the password protected part of our website, please register and sign in here: <http://nwaafa.org/events/bod/> .