

## NWA-AFA MEC Weekly Hotline Message June 05, 2009

**MEC HOTLINE:** (888) 3-NWA-AFA or [www.nwaafa.org](http://www.nwaafa.org)

**PURPLE RIBBON CAMPAIGN:** Pro-Delta, Pro-AFA [www.deltaafa.org](http://www.deltaafa.org)

### **LETTER TO THE EDITOR**

On May 29 I, along with other [Government Affairs Committee](#) members, received the following letter from a fellow flight attendant regarding the recent law that was changed in Minnesota regarding unemployment insurance benefits for flight attendants on a voluntary leave through the SLIP program. I believe this letter is a testament to what our union is all about; flight attendants helping other flight attendants! It is also a classic example of the AFA-CWA Government Affairs motto, "legislate, don't negotiate." I thank Beth for sharing this with us. -- Submitted by MEC Communications Chair/NYC Government Affairs Chair Rene Foss

*"One of the things I appreciate about AFA is their active involvement at the governmental level. In August, 2005, when NWA was facing bankruptcy, they offered a leave where they would not contest unemployment benefits. I called the state of Minnesota before taking this leave, and was told since I was taking the place of a Flight Attendant who would be laid off, I would receive benefits. Another Flight Attendant called 7 times and was assured over and over that we would get the benefits. And we did. Unfortunately, in January of 2006 we received a letter saying that we would now have to pay it all back. AFA took on our cause even when they were not even our union. A lawyer was hired and we appealed the ruling until it could go no further. Because of an obscure state statute, it didn't matter what the state promised us, we would still have to pay it back. My portion was over \$7000 and it personally devastated my family (total loss from that ruling: \$40,000, due to the fact that I would have worked that year at NWA) from which we are still recovering. I can only imagine all the work that went into achieving this victory. Bless you for continuing the fight and not giving up. THANK YOU from the bottom of my heart! Please send this on to anyone else who worked to get this passed." -- Signed by MSP Flight Attendant Beth Dutton (reprinted with permission).*

### **NORTHWEST AIRLINES 757 MAKES EMERGENCY LANDING**

(Waterloo, Iowa) A Northwest Airlines 757 en route to Los Angeles from Detroit, MI made an emergency landing at the Waterloo Airport Tuesday. The plane with 118 passengers and 8 crew members.

Click the following link to view the full article:

<http://www.ireport.com/docs/DOC-266239?ref=email>

## **SLC SATELLITE BASE OPENS: SLC-NRT INAUGURAL FLIGHT**

Our newest pre-merger NW flight attendant Satellite Base opened this month and the SLC airport commemorated our first NW/DL flight from Salt Lake City to Tokyo's Narita. To view a video of the water canon salute and interviews with some of our first SLC-NRT passengers, please click here:

<http://www.ksl.com/?nid=148&sid=6695256&autostart=y>. We currently have 81 pre-merger NW flight attendants based in SLC, flying a combination of International and Domestic flying. It is likely that the SLC satellite will re-open for more transfers in the near future. AFA and NW recently announced a new satellite base in Chicago as well, to open for the August 2009 flying month. Please review LOA #20 in our contract <http://nwaafa.org/contract/letter20/> and company information on ATLAS for more information about how our contractual Satellite Base program works. NOTE: Please be advised that all contractual Scheduling, Sick Leave, Bidding, etc. provisions apply in our Satellites. Delta's Alternate Flying Program (AFP) policies do not apply to our pre-merger Satellite Bases or members.

## **WHAT IS "EAP"? WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW**

Last week Delta announced a transition in company EAP providers, from NEAS to OptumHealth, so now is a great time to remind everyone just exactly what "EAP" is. EAP stands for Employee Assistance Program. The concept of EAP has been around for more than thirty years, and reflects the idea that a mentally and emotionally happy and healthy employee is a *great* employee. Most national corporations, and many smaller businesses, offer some type of EAP to their work groups.

At Northwest, and now with Delta, flight attendants have access to two separate, but complimentary, Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs): AFA's EAP, and DL's off-property provider, OptumHealth. The two programs work both independently, and as a team, to provide optimal mental and emotional health support for flight attendants. Flight attendant can use either of them or, better yet, both!

## **AFA EAP V. OPTUMHEALTH EAP**

**The Association of Flight Attendants EAP (AFA EAP):** We are a Union committee of active line flight attendants who volunteer our time and commitment to support *you*, our fellow crew members. We have all completed EAP training taught by Heather Healy, AFA's International EAP Director. At present, your EAP Committee consists of about 35 EAP Representatives based throughout our system. We offer assistance in four major areas:

- Professional Standards
- Critical Incident Response
- Substance Abuse

- Work/Life Issues

The support provided by your AFA EAP is strictly **confidential, neutral** and **impartial**. For a list of current EAP Reps and phone numbers, visit AFA's EAP page at <http://www.afanet.org/eap/> and click on the link entitled "Contact Your Local EAP Rep". Scroll down to where the NWA names are listed by base. Give us a call - we're here to help!

**OptumHealth:** Also known as the "company EAP," OptumHealth is an outside vendor of nationwide EAP services contracted by Northwest/DL to provide confidential support to all employees (not just flight attendants). This EAP service is NOT a part of Northwest or Delta, and does NOT reveal employee information, other than as required by law. The EAP specialists at OptumHealth are Master's level counselors, and provide support and referral services for a wide variety of issues, including financial and legal questions. ***OptumHealth's confidential; 24-hour helpline is 800-533-6939.***

### ***FMLA UPDATE***

On May 27 we received a memo from In Flight Services Human Resources advising us of a change in the processing of our FMLA claims. All claims will now be processed by calling Sedgwick Claim Management Services Inc, a service currently used by Delta Air Lines. It is important to remember that this change does not have an effect on our contractual language as stated in our collective bargaining agreement, 18.5, D. This change does not mean we will be transitioning to Delta's policy on Family Leave. The company must continue to adhere to our negotiated contract language for purposes of FMLA eligibility. We will be monitoring this new service carefully to ensure that our negotiated language is followed properly.

We have been working to get the FMLA Technical Corrections Act passed into law and we are already half way there. The House passed their bill (HR912) in February and it is currently being introduced in the Senate. Once the Senate approves the bill it will then go to the president for his signature. Once it becomes law than every airline will be required to abide by the same baseline protections of the law.

However, collective bargaining agreements can enhance the threshold hours for requirement stated in the bill or make other enhancements to the FMLA benefits. Once we begin to negotiate our combined contract we can choose to make that a priority in the world's premier flight attendant contract. To read the language in the bill (HR912) that passed the House and will be introduced in the Senate, go to <http://nwaafa.org/committees/govaffairs/>

Please refer to the Memo dated May 27th in the *What's New* section of ATLAS for procedural changes. -- Submitted by Albert Garcia, MEC Government Affairs Chair

### ***WHAT'S THE DEAL WITH THE DATE ON THE DELTA IDs?***

Thank you for continuing to report discrepancies in the Date of Employment (DOE) printed on our new Delta IDs. We have received dozens of calls from Flight Attendants concerned that Delta has adjusted their seniority, and here's the scoop. The new date on your new ID badge does not mean your seniority has changed. Beyond that, there are two things to know.

First, most of the new badges reflect a Date of Employment that is approximately six weeks later than the Seniority date we use for bidding and pass travel. This was not an error, according to the company, but a conscious decision to be consistent with pre-merger Delta Flight Attendant badges.

As you probably know, use of "training date" Seniority (the date initial training commenced) for bidding purposes and pass travel is a contractual issue that was won in the Yellow Book. This contractually enforceable date remains, unchanged. Accrual of seniority for pay and longevity, however, begins to accrue from the date a Flight Attendant is first placed on the payroll (Date of Employment or Hire Date). [CBA Section 20.A.1-2](#). The company chose the second date to be placed on new IDs.

The second thing to know is that there are still a number of incorrectly dated badges. While most IDs were issued with the DOE as the first date on payroll, some were still processed incorrectly with Training Dates. Based on your feedback, we have provided the company with a list of discrepancies, which are currently being reviewed. The bottom line on this issue for now is this: whether the badges are reissued or not, your correct seniority for bidding and pass travel remains in the computer and is not affected in any way. New badges will be issued for all Delta Flight Attendants in 2010, which may or may not include employment dates.

### ***A MESSAGE FROM YOUR MEMBER ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE***

As we begin our Delta "Indoctrination" this month, otherwise known as "IQ", I would like to remind all of you of your right to wear your union pin while on company time. We have worked hard over the years and won the right to wear that insignia. So I am asking each and every one of you when attending your IQ, please remember to don your AFA pin on your outerwear during IQ attendance. It shows our solidarity and shows that we understand our contractual rights.

Also covered under our collective bargaining agreement are our Special Assignment Flight Attendants. After all, you are a flight attendant on our seniority list and pay your dues; it's your right to wear a pin as an instructor as well. So, to our SAFA's working hard in IQ and any other duty you perform for your fellow brothers and sisters and the company, I say; "You have the right to wear your pin too." When you wear it proudly it is an indication to all that we can be Pro-AFA & Pro-Delta.

We still have a contract folks. Proudly wear our pin - that shows you have earned respect and accountability from our company and each other. --  
Submitted by MEC Member Engagement Chair Angela Brewer

### ***U.S. FORCES DELTA TO POSTPONE SERVICE TO LIBERIA, KENYA***

The U.S. government will not allow Delta to serve flight routes to Kenya and Liberia because of security concerns. Delta said it had recently learned about the decision by the Transportation Security Administration and said the agency likely just needs time to approve the flights. For further information view The Charlotte Observer (N.C.) [http://www.charlotteobserver.com/136/story/758819.html/The Associated Press](http://www.charlotteobserver.com/136/story/758819.html/The-Associated-Press) (6/2) , [Google/Agence France-Presse](#) (6/2) , [ABC News](#) (6/2) , [Aviation Daily](#)

### ***RELATED NEW ARTICLES***

Hong Kong Pilots and Flight Attendants ordered to memorize company creed  
[http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/271307\\_pilots-in-hong-kong-ordered-to-memorise-and-recite-company-creed.html](http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/271307_pilots-in-hong-kong-ordered-to-memorise-and-recite-company-creed.html)

Branson predicts demise major airline  
[http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2009-06-02-branson-us-outlook\\_N.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/travel/flights/2009-06-02-branson-us-outlook_N.htm)