

NWA-AFA MEC Weekly Hotline Message August 28, 2009

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

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

UNION STRONG – AFA MEMBERS STEP UP TO SAVE OUR CONTRACT

Campaign efforts continue throughout the country, and support for a legal contract is growing daily at both Northwest and Delta, however only your engagement is going to make this happen. If you value a legal contract going forward, the time to show your support and to help is NOW.

Many of our colleagues continue efforts to share our story with our communities. AFA Local 95 MSP Rep Katie Martin and her family contributed this cut out (along with the two future flight attendant candidates in it). Please stop by the Minnesota State Fair to say hello and help them raise awareness of our drive to retain collective bargaining at the world's largest airline, in the biggest flight attendant election in the history of the NMB. Our pilots, executives, and meteorologists have already decided that a contract is just good business, and we're pleased that we'll soon have our own chance to vote for AFA and our own bargaining rights. Help now at www.deltaafa.org.

The National Mediation Board is investigating our application for a Single Carrier Designation for flight attendants, and we expect a determination in the near future. Now that we have filed, the NMB has control over the pace of the election process, however we do believe our voting period will be sometime in mid-October to mid-November.

CHECK YOUR BAGS - CREW AGRICULTURE INSPECTIONS ON THE RISE

NWA-AFA has learned that CBP. - US Customs and Border Patrol– and the USDA have implemented a six-week crackdown on aircrew member agriculture inspections. They will be targeting crew bags looking for prohibited items like fresh fruit and vegetables, meat, etc., as you clear customs and immigration after an international flight. One of our members very unintentionally brought in a rotten apple last week and was fined \$500 on the spot. The fact that the apple was there for weeks and the crewmember had simply forgotten was not taken into consideration by the port authorities. Indeed, the inspectors hold crewmembers to a higher standard of knowing importation rules since we are so often engaged in international travel.

The first infraction is \$500 and the fine more than doubles on the second. There is little to no appeal process so we encourage you to take steps to avoid agriculture fines! Double check your bags and personal items and be sure to dispose of any prohibited items before exiting the airplane! Click on

www.cbp.gov for complete information and a list of prohibited items. –Scott Wall, Vice President LEC 96, Seattle

SECURITY ALERT – BANGKOK

Delta's Corporate Security has issued an alert for BKK for the next seven days. The opposition United Front for Democracy Against Dictatorship (UDD) – commonly known as the “red shirts” will rally outside Government House to demand the resignation of the current Prime Minister. Demonstrations will begin at the Royal Plaza, marching towards Government House.

Tens of thousands of UDD supporters are expected, along with associated travel disruptions. Heightened security measures will be in place, with the police erecting roadblocks and security checkpoints around the protest venue. As with previous protests, the Thai military may be called upon to intervene as necessary.

Crewmembers are advised to avoid the Sanam Luang, Royal Plaza, and Government House as well as any and all protests, demonstrations or rallies. Continue to use good situational awareness and report any threats to crew safety and security. – Jeanne Elliott, Chair, MEC Air Safety, Health and Security

UNITED HEALTH CARE – INFORMATION ABOUT OUR NEW PROVIDER

We're pleased that our contractual requirements have led to the addition of a traditional indemnity plan option for pre-merger Delta flight attendants in 2010. Click [HERE](#) to view information about the HRA and HSA plans that are the current non-union medical options at Delta, which the IRS calls “high deductible plans”.

Unfortunately, the 2009 UHC PPO plan was recently rated by Consumer Reports at #39 out of 41 plans that were rated. Our current Blue Cross of MN PPO was rated at #21 out of 41 in 2009, to give you an idea for comparison's sake. [Section 29 - Insurance](#) of our contract outlines who and what is covered by our medical plan, and allows no more than a 7% increase in premium costs for AFA represented flight attendants. However, with a contract at the world's largest airline, hopefully UHG can follow in BCBS's footsteps and avoid premium increases in 2010. Industry wide reports indicate that the 2010 plan year will see premium increases, increases in employees' share, and plan design changes to limit benefits.

On August 25th MSNBC's [Countdown Investigates](#) reported on United Health Group. UHG has recently settled lawsuits for hundreds of millions of dollars, among them a lawsuit that was one brought by the American Medical Association that alleged a scheme to defraud patients. UHG has also been plagued by executive compensation scandals, and in late 2008 settled an \$895 million class

action lawsuit over stock option back dating. While publicly stating it supports health care reform efforts, [TPM](#) reports that UHG is asking employees to attend anti-health care reform “tea parties.” A meeting has been set up after Labor Day between your MEC and Rob Kight, Vice President of Compensation and Benefits.

PBS SUPPORT & SCHEDULING COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN SEPTEMBER

Even as a lot of initiatives have slowed to a frustrating pace recently, AFA representatives and committee volunteers continue to work hard to make a difference in our work lives. The Scheduling Committee will meet with the company on September 22nd and the [PBS Support Team](#) will meet on September 23rd in MSP. Visit the MEC Committee pages for the [Scheduling Committee Meeting agenda](#) and the proposed [PBS Support Team agenda](#). We would like to express our thanks to all AFA volunteer members and leaders, who continue to work hard to effect positive change for flight attendants throughout the merger.

AQ TRAINING: CHANGES BEING MADE . . .

As a result of members’ feedback and AFA’s advocacy for change, on Monday the MEC Air Safety, Health and Security (ASHS) Committee was advised of specific improvements made to training logistics, curriculum and communications as follows:

Logistics: In MSP, the hotel’s restaurant will now remain open until 2230. A revised AQ training letter provided to flight attendants with upcoming training dates includes further information on expanded food availability in not only MSP, but ATL and SLC as well.

BOS and MEM flight attendants scheduled in SLC have been offered to change their training to MSP or ATL to alleviate the long duty day. LAX flight attendants are being offered training in SLC (October/November/January) in lieu of MSP.

Issues with the Park Plaza / MSP/ transportation have been worked out, with the bus now running “on time.” If there’s a wait beyond 30 minutes, taxis can be made available on a case-by-case basis.

Success Rate: A 97% success rate has been reported, with only one FA required to re-take the 3-day training. The concern that instructors are not advising FAs what they may have done incorrectly at any given door to require a re-take was addressed. We were advised that it is AQP protocols to not coach on the first re-take – but it may be provided on the second attempt. Insofar as written exams/assessments being re-taken, it was stated that such re-takes have been very low for all sections.

Curriculum: With the “end state” Onboard Manual (OBM) planned for pickup at the bases the last two weeks of November and effective on December 1st, all pertinent information on all aircraft will be incorporated and reflected in the training curriculum. Efforts are being made to ensure all verbiage is aligned and consistent. The CBT will also include the “end state” OBM manual references.

The concern that the “classroom guide”, which cannot be removed for study, was addressed. With the new OBM being issued, all information contained in the guide will be available in the OBM,

Regarding aircraft exams/assessment questions being included but NOT covered in various resources or classroom discussion, we were advised that all exams have now been reviewed for accuracy and consistency with all resources available. Questions will continue to be changed and all exams rotated regularly.

Concerns regarding inconsistent instruction on expectations and/or leniency at door drills was addressed. It was stated that all commands presently in effect must be adhered to – that is, the appropriate command at the appropriate time must be given.

We continue to monitor all AQ classes and communicate with IFS training on further changes needed. We look forward to your comments and feedback once you have completed the training. Let us hear from you!

AQ CBT TRAINING AND MAC COMPUTERS

Aircraft Qualification or AQ as it is known to most, is now in full swing and has created stress and inconvenience for many of our members. AFA quickly learned about online training issues with the Delta LMS, in particular the AQ videos and Apple computers.

AFA MEC Vice President Daniel Grey began discussions with Delta about the issue after receiving frequent emails and calls from members, only to be told originally that the system would not support Apple. AFA looked at other options to try to help accommodate our members on Apple computers, from terminal emulations to other browser options.

Our perseverance paid off last week, as Delta quietly updated the LMS system to now accommodate Apple computers using the Firefox browser. We have confirmation from several flight attendants that the system is now fully functioning with Firefox. Our thanks go to NWA’s Jeanell Walsh, for her efforts to address this issue.

If you find any other issues or changes to the program that need to be addressed please feel free to contact AFA. To download the Firefox browser, go to

<http://www.mozilla.com/firefox/> - NWA AFA Webmaster Neal McMahon