

ALPA Pilot Leaders Unite in Advance of Negotiations

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The leaders of five ALPA pilot groups met in Cincinnati last week to develop a common strategy in dealing with current and upcoming contract negotiations with their respective managements.

Capt. J.C. Lawson, Capt. Michael Jayson, Capt. Bill Dressler, Capt. Tom Wychor, and Capt. Dave Nieuwenhuis -- the Master Executive Council (MEC) chairmen of the pilot groups at Comair, Mesa Air Group, ExpressJet, Mesaba, and Atlantic Southeast Airlines -- issued the following statements expressing the unity of their pilot groups.

The August 14th meeting provided a forum for developing a pattern-bargaining approach to negotiations. With the pilots of Atlantic Southeast Airlines poised to enter their sixth year of contract negotiations, the leaders expressed concerns and discussed strategy for this and for Mesa Air Group whose pilots are preparing to enter negotiations in September of this year.

Comair MEC Chairman Capt. J.C. Lawson stated, "This meeting was a tremendous success. By presenting a united front and a common strategy, we will be able to negotiate improved contracts that will reward pilots for all their hard work and dedication."

Mesa Air Group MEC Chairman Capt. Michael Jayson agreed, "Our pilots are frustrated by management's utter disregard for many sections of our current contract and fully appreciate the support we receive across company lines from our fellow ALPA brothers and sisters. By having strategic and successful meetings such as this one, we will maximize our bargaining strength."

ExpressJet MEC Chairman Bill Dressler added, "The success of this meeting allows us to negotiate with confidence with our managements. The era of managements whipsawing pilot groups against each other to compete for flying, at the expense of all pilots, must come to a close."

Atlantic Southeast Airlines MEC Chairman Dave Nieuwenhuis concluded, saying that, "We're putting to bed any notions our respective managements have that they are going to be able to pit pilots against each other for their gain. That's just not going to happen."

The meeting of the pilot leaders focused on the common goal of building unity and reaching out to all carriers. While more work remains, the future is coming into focus.

"What happens at one carrier is going to affect pilots at other carriers," Capt. Tom Wychor, MEC Chairman for Mesaba Airlines observed. "If we watch out for one another, we protect ourselves at the same time."

Founded in 1931, ALPA is the world's largest pilot union representing more than 61,000 cockpit crewmembers at 40 airlines in the U.S. and Canada.

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