

Midwest Pilots Express Outrage at Airline's Deal With Republic Airways

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Captain Jay Schnedorf, chairman of the Midwest Airlines unit of the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), issued this statement today following Midwest Airlines' announcement that it had secured commitments from Republic Airways Holdings. As part of the deal, Midwest announced that Republic flightcrews would fly 12 EMB 170s as Midwest Connect, beginning October 1, 2008, directly replacing all but nine of the Boeing 717 aircraft flown by Midwest pilots.

"This is catastrophic news for our pilot group and for all Midwest employees. Management's plan to replace all but nine of our B-717s with EMB 170s and replace Midwest pilots with Republic pilots will have a devastating impact -- raising the number of Midwest pilots who are out of work to approximately 300 of the some 400 pilots who were employed before TPG/NWA purchased the airline earlier this year. Furthermore, management restated its continued intent to wring drastic, draconian concessions from our pilots, holding our very jobs hostage as part of its deal with Republic.

"Midwest pilots are outraged that management is using such underhanded tactics and further decimating this airline. We are putting management on notice that they cannot hold a gun to our heads and deal with our pilot group in this manner. We strongly believe that management's actions are a repudiation of its contract with us, and we are exploring all of our options to protect our pilots and hold management accountable for the deal it made with us in 2000 and the concessions we made during our company's restructuring in 2003.

"A year ago, CEO Tim Hoeksema stated publicly that the deal with TPG/Northwest would 'be good for our airline, the employees, and the community.' Make no mistake: with this latest deal, Mr. Hoeksema, TPG, and Northwest have revealed their complete disregard for this airline and its employees. Today marks a dark day in the history of Milwaukee, Wisconsin, as management has essentially sounded the death knell for Midwest Airlines and the reputation the employees have built for providing the 'best care in the air.'"

ALPA is the bargaining representative for the 400 pilots at Midwest Airlines. Founded in 1931, ALPA represents 53,000 pilots at 37 airlines in the United States and Canada.

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