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As we mentioned in our inaugural issue in December 2010, *Touch & Gos* is intended to provide you with short updates on items of recent interest and newsworthy items that may not lend themselves to separate, standalone coverage. We also intend to provide you with additional information about your union and its resources. It is to this latter end that we introduce the *Your Union at Work* series. The *Your Union at Work* series will cover a number of “back to basics” topics that we hope you will find useful and informative as we approach contract negotiations.

Your Union at Work: Preparing for Negotiations

Executive Summary

- Your union continues to ramp up preparations for contract negotiations
- The MEC will chart a course of action within the next few months
- ALPA International is providing a vast array of experienced professionals who will assist the MEC in establishing and accomplishing its goals
- The Negotiating Committee is preparing a series of contract education/comparison pieces and a comprehensive contract survey
- P2P is gearing up to assist the MEC in gathering pilot input

Background

With the merger complete and with less than two years until our contract’s amendable date, some might believe that your union would kick back on autopilot for awhile before preparing for our upcoming negotiations. Not so.

While January 2013 is still a ways off, the PWA stipulates that “openers” can be exchanged up to 270 days in advance of the amendable date, which would occur in early April 2012—just over one year away. If you create a timeline with that date as the “opener endpoint,” you very quickly see that preparations have to start now—and will accelerate throughout this year and into 2012.

Currently, the Strategic Planning Committee is preparing options for the MEC to consider at the MEC meeting this month. Most pilots understand the time value of money, and we have all witnessed the results (or lack thereof) from recent protracted contract negotiations at other carriers, with American and US Airways providing prime examples. In order to prepare for the upcoming MEC meeting, the Strategic Planning Committee and the MEC administration are being assisted by a vast array of ALPA National resources. Recently, the Strategic Planning Committee and members of the administration and committee structure met with the Director of ALPA’s Economic and Financial Analysis Department, ALPA’s general counsel (a team of professional negotiators and experts on the Railway Labor Act), ALPA attorneys (more professional negotiators), and ALPA’s Director of Representation (another highly experienced professional negotiator). All were directly involved in recent ALPA successes at Alaska, Air Tran, and Spirit.

These resources and many others will allow the Strategic Planning Committee to present extensive, up-to-date and relevant information to the MEC. This information, coupled with extensive input from line pilots, will assist the MEC in charting our future course of action. Our MEC has access to literally hundreds of years of negotiating experience and expertise. Under the MEC’s direction, this professional expertise, along with exhaustive

preparation by the MEC will pave the path to success. Moving forward, the MEC will consider a variety of options and set a strategic plan in motion at the end of extensive deliberations.

Simultaneously, the Negotiating Committee will work closely with the Communications Committee as well as many other committees to prepare an in-depth series of communications on contract education and comparisons with industry counterparts, as well as a comprehensive system-wide pilot contract survey. The negotiators will rely on many of the same resources listed earlier with additional help from ALPA's Retirement and Insurance attorneys and actuaries and a professional economist from ALPA's E&FA department to assist with contract costing and comparisons.

Last month, the Pilot to Pilot Committee leadership met with the director of ALPA's Communications Department, members of the Information Technology Department and others. Among its many ongoing efforts, the committee is establishing an online form for P2P volunteers to provide near real-time feedback to the administration and the MEC. P2P is also rolling out a phased training program, with the first training session having taken place at the end of January. Other training sessions are scheduled this month and in March, with an added goal of taking these training sessions on the

road to the P2P volunteers at various pilot domiciles throughout the system.

In short, the tempo of activity is increasing every week. A number of volunteer opportunities will open along the way as we extend the reach of our union.

Let there be no doubt: *Your local elected representatives will chart the course of negotiations and make the decisions they were elected to make, but they will have the benefit of being able to call on a team of ALPA experts and advisors to provide assistance throughout the negotiations process. Under this approach, the MEC can capitalize on each professional's particular expertise, knowledge, and experience, in order to help us build a powerful, unified, and effective overall effort. These extensive resources will be invaluable to the MEC as they establish and execute the strategic plan.*

As we recently noted, the Allied Pilots Association, representing the pilots of American Airlines, has reached an agreement with ALPA to tap some of those same resources to "kick start" their negotiations, which have been stalled for several years. They too recognize the extensive value of ALPA's resources, and we wish them every success.

Stay tuned for more. The autopilot is off, and we're not resting.
