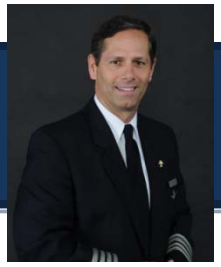

What's Happening at the Table?

The summer heat has settled here in Texas where negotiations are taking place on almost a daily basis. The APA has sent several updates on the status of negotiations and while the company posts updates on aanegotiations.com, I'm not sure you all know they are there. I think it's important that you hear what is happening at the bargaining table from the company's viewpoint and from someone who personally understands what's important to pilots.

As you've probably heard, negotiations continue to gain momentum and are moving forward with open, frank and creative conversations. Key contract items are being discussed and both sides are rolling up their sleeves to try to get this deal done. After long periods of negotiations without much to show for it, for the first time in a long time, I feel like everyone involved wants to get a contract and get it sooner rather than later.

Discussions have become more focused, and items like Work Rules, Benefits, Scope and Pay are either being discussed or will be soon. Over the last few months, you've heard that a lot of time and energy has been spent on work rules. Improving our scheduling system is beneficial from both the pilot's and the company's perspective. After many hours of productive talks, both sides have passed comprehensive proposals on the topic and we are working toward agreement. My hope is that this piece will be the spring board to increase the pace of negotiations. The latest discussions have focused on sequence protection, a new trip trading system, new monthly maximums, equipment groupings for pay, and a new reserve system…all without discussion of PBS!

The company recognizes the importance of income stability and included sequence protection in its proposal. Other than limited protections in the current contract (i.e. marketing and last trip of the month), we've never had this. It's a big move for AA, and it's not cheap, but assuring the pilots of a predictable income is valuable to both the pilots and the company.

New monthly maximums will loosen the constraints our current contract has restricted us to for years. We want to increase your flexibility in order to enhance your quality of life and paycheck. There is a lot of talk about the amount of voluntary flying you can do in a month. Your ability to fly more if you want, without "paper legalities," is significant for both sides. Discussions also continue on an automated trip-trading system to replace TTOT. A dynamic system that could do pilot-to-pilot trades would be a big improvement over a system that requires you to wait for a trip to show up in open time. Both sides also want you to have the opportunity to pick up trips closer to sign in time instead of being locked out the day before. This could result in more flying for line holders and less for reserves, resulting in more line holders overall.

Both the company and APA negotiators have been working hard and want to get this wrapped up so that all of us can collectively work toward making our company successful. My belief is that, together, we will get this contract settled and shift our focus to professional excellence while helping guide our company to a profitable future. Hang in there and thanks for all you do.

Fly safe,

Jim