

**Opening Remarks by Capt. John Prater, ALPA President
104th Regular Executive Board Meeting
April 28, 2009**

“Writing a History of Firsts”

Good morning fellow ALPA leaders, and welcome to the 104th meeting of the Executive Board. Before I begin my formal remarks, I would like to recognize ALPA’s newest members and honor our fallen pilots.

In December 2008, the 450 pilots of Colgan Air, voted for ALPA representation and now bring an unmatched level of excitement to our ranks. There’s no doubt in my mind that the Colgan pilots proudly wear their ALPA wings.

Capt. Mark Segaloff, Colgan MEC Chairman, joins us today as a member of the Executive Board. He played an integral role in bringing Colgan pilots into our Union, and instantly took on one of the toughest responsibilities of any ALPA Master Chairman: leading his group—with strong, coordinated support from ALPA’s Engineering and Air Safety, Communications, Representation, and Legal departments—through the aftermath of the tragic accident of Continental Connection Flight 3407 near Buffalo, New York.

All souls on board perished, including crewmembers Capt. Marvin Renslow, First Officer Rebecca Shaw, Flight Attendant Matilda Quintero, Flight Attendant Donna Prisco, and Capt. Joseph Zuffoletto.

The ALPA family experienced another loss just one month later when FedEx Express Flight 80 to Tokyo, Japan crashed upon landing, killing both Capt. Kevin Mosley and First Officer Anthony Pino.

Please remember these pilots, and other ALPA members who have flown west, during this moment of silence.

Thank you.

I usually start off my remarks with a snapshot of the big picture—the external and internal factors that affect our pilots and their families, and us, as union leaders. After all, we're the ones trying to make a difference, whether it's in our individual pilot group, in our larger role within ALPA, in our profession, or in our industry.

But this morning, I'm going to get straight to the point. I'm here to tell you that you have made a difference. You helped turn the tide.

For the first time in ALPA history, the BOD charted the course for our union's future at its meeting last October. You launched the process of setting clear goals, and directed this union to focus all efforts on the core items that have powered our union forward—for our members, for future aviators, and for the ALPA Representatives who will follow in our footsteps.

Now, with a new U.S. administration, some very favorable appointments, pending confirmations, and a strengthened union by organizing successes—we are making our own opportunities. Those opportunities help put ALPA back where it belongs: front and center, leading and speaking for our profession.

My fellow ALPA brothers and sisters, thanks to your dedication and your service, we're answering the orders given to us by our members.

When we began to shape our union's strategic priorities, we didn't know what the face of the U.S. Congress or Administration would be. And now, we live in a world that has a new foundation that we helped build. It's the kind of change

you hoped for, but may have been concerned to openly embrace. But now, with those changes and our Union's strategic plan at your fingertips, you can see the progress we're making to achieve our members' goals.

The results are coming in... After considering what we've accomplished in the 180 days since the Board of Directors met and gave us our marching orders, I stand before you today to proudly trumpet those accomplishments.

It starts with addressing your reaffirmation of ALPA's organizing goal: to represent all North American pilots. We just welcomed the Colgan pilots to their first Executive Board meeting, and later we will vote on a merger of our Union with the National Pilots Association, which currently represents the 1,700 pilots at AirTran.

I'll hold my remarks on that agenda item, but suffice it to say, that upon your approval—AirTran pilots will make their official step into the ALPA family today, providing all of us with added strength and solidarity to help all of our members. I look forward to that moment, when we can welcome every NPA member into their new union.

Now, follow that with a new collective bargaining cycle and you've ginned up the change we need to get our pilots a better quality of life. Tackling your call to action in Committee Two, ALPA has made significant gains in cornerstone contract areas despite the largest economic downturn and continued cuts in capacity. How did we do that?

First, we have stayed on message. We said we will work with managers and investors, who include pilots in the successes, and fight the ones who want to destroy our contracts and our profession; and we're doing just that.

The pilots and union leaders of Delta Air Lines and Northwest Airlines set the stage when they went to work under a single new ALPA contract, that provides their members with equity in the company and improves pay, retirement, and work rules – and then **together** fashioned a seniority process agreement under the ALPA Merger policy.

Unprecedented proactive efforts on the part of both pilot groups, both MECs, and their committees—backed by their strong international union with the finest resources available —resulted in a successful and efficient merger, dramatic evidence that pilots can, should, and will play an integral part in corporate transactions.

With the world watching their every move, they followed their strategic plan, kept their goal in sight, and wrote a new page in ALPA history that sets the example for how a merger gets done right.

Around that same time, pilots at American Eagle, Mesa, and Kelowna Flightcraft ratified agreements that moved the pattern forward. These groups established conditions in both the U.S. and Canada that include not only better pay, but greater control of scheduling and other work rules. Island Air and Alaska recently reached Tentative Agreements that make these same noteworthy strides in cornerstones of our contracts.

Now, I cannot continue without mentioning the efforts of a group of trade unionists who make up ALPA's Strategic Preparedness & Strike Committee or SPSC.

They have traveled across the country and across borders to work with MECs and SPC committees to help reach our goals, working with groups such as Spirit and Trans States, who are in serious fights with cut-throat managements. The

MECs and Negotiating Committees at these two pilot groups have asked for our support to prepare for collective action if needed to get the fair contracts their members deserve. In fact, strike ballots are under way at both properties.

As Committee 1 will discuss and report at this meeting, and pursuant to our Strategic Plan, ALPA's pattern bargaining efforts are well under way with Delta/Northwest and Alaska, and will continue to accelerate at Continental, which is already 4 months past their amendable date to fix a concessionary contract. Pinnacle and Hawaiian are deep into section six negotiations, as well.

Add to that contract negotiations at Evergreen, CCI, and the start of negotiations for a first contract at CommutAir and Colgan—I'm here to tell you that ALPA pilots, standing together, helping each other through rock-solid unity, set this union on a path to success.

Now, combine that unity with the financial muscle of our major contingency fund, which we will continue to use, plus ALPA's resolve to be fully engaged in assisting our newest brothers and sisters at AirTran -- not only to merge NPA into ALPA -- but also get their first ALPA contract, and management has to be revisiting its own efforts to delay and frustrate pilot expectations for a strong contract and strong contract enforcement.

And with our United brothers and sisters heading into section six negotiations to recover from their bankruptcy contract, along with Air Canada Jazz getting ready to negotiate soon, our Union will make this year interesting for managements. I am supremely confident the trend of completing gains in ALPA contracts will continue.

ALPA historically excels in this arena, and I'm proud to say that you fine-tuned this strength by insisting that our pilot groups share information across industry sectors and discuss the principles of career progression and protection.

We answered that initiative by establishing new groups such as the Fee for Departure Committee and reviving vital communication channels among our members, especially in the Representational realm.

ALPA's unique opportunity to share successful strategies among pilot groups, gives our union the advantage to plan—and to execute collective gains for the entire profession. The evidence speaks for itself.

Changing gears, here, let's talk about another historic moment—November's election, and President Barack Obama's inauguration. I told you at the Board in October that our work on the Presidential campaign and your support of ALPA PAC were instrumental in ALPA being the voice of airline pilots.

Today, I cannot share every encounter we've had to voice your concerns—even though I really want to!—but I assure you that ALPA is the only Pilots' Union that has this access and our voice is backed by our affiliation with over 10.5 million Union workers of the AFL-CIO.

These affiliations landed me, and other AFL-CIO Executive Council members, in the White House East Room, where we witnessed President Obama signing several executive orders which were designed to reverse the harmful effects of what the previous administration did to organized labor on many fronts.

President Obama said, and I quote, "I do not view the labor movement as part of the problem; to me, and to my administration, labor unions are a big part of the solution."

President Obama is serious about keeping good jobs, and I'm confident that opportunities to improve our industry and our members' livelihoods with this new administration will continue to flow our way. The administration's appointees to influential positions such as the Department of Transportation, the Department of Labor, and the National Mediation Board are individuals who respect ALPA; these government officials, such as Ray LaHood, Hilda Solis, and Linda Puchala, are friends of labor.

In fact, for the first time in ALPA history, the President of the United States has nominated a former ALPA President—Capt. Randy Babbitt—for the post of FAA Administrator. We're waiting for the day that the US Senate confirms President Obama's selection of Captain Babbitt. And as the President makes more nominations to agencies that rule air line pilots' lives, I guarantee you that ALPA's voice will be heard on unfilled posts at the TSA, the NTSB, as well as the FAA and DOT.

As we prepare to welcome a new FAA Administrator, we also need to tip our hats to the outgoing Transport Canada Director General of Civil Aviation. After many years of government service to Canadian citizens and to the international aviation community, Merlin Preuss is retiring. Merlin has been a great friend of ALPA over the years, and we congratulate him on his many contributions to improving the safety of our industry.

Many know that Merlin has been the international champion for Safety Management Systems, bringing that concept to a reality in Canada. While his successor has not yet been selected, rest assured that ALPA is not a stranger to any of the candidates for the position, and we look forward to continuing our pro-safety relationship with the Canadian Government.

I truly believe the initial headway we are making with our two administrations results from our willingness to cultivate a relationship through the activism of

many individual ALPA members and our Union's role within the AFL-CIO and CLC. I have consciously worked to ensure that ALPA is intricately involved with our brothers and sisters in the Labor movement.

I have chosen to actively re-affiliate our union with more local and state councils, and directed ALPA's SPSC to support working men and women in other unions on our members' behalf. I serve on 4 AFL CIO committees, plus the President's Executive Committee, as well as the International Committee. Because of our involvement in those Labor efforts, in the President's first 100 days, I have had the opportunity to advocate airline pilot issues before Secretaries Solis, LaHood, TSA Acting-Administrator Rossides, Vice President Biden, and President Obama.

This fall, the AFL-CIO will elect new leadership as President Sweeney has announced his retirement. As we head into the September AFL-CIO convention, the officers are deeply involved in reunification discussions with unions that withdrew from the AFL-CIO just 4 years ago.

The only issue is the strength, solidarity, and effectiveness of the Labor Movement. With all due deliberation, I have ensured that ALPA is intimately involved with that future. We represent highly skilled men and women who are consummate professionals, but we are Labor. As ALPA leaders, we too must be prepared to act with assurance and speed should any reunification opportunities present themselves.

Through your work and support for initiatives that range from safety to security to defending our members' jobs, you can rest assured that our nations' leaders recognize ALPA as *the* voice for airline pilots and labor as a whole.

And that brings us back to the resounding resolution you passed in BOD Delegate Committee Five—the call to elevate ALPA's communications efforts in

the media, on Capitol and Parliament Hills, and in industry forums, so that ALPA remains the recognized voice for the profession.

With the strategic plan as our guide, we launched an aggressive mount on this front, starting with the press conference we held in early February. With Captains Kay and Hesselbein, this event provided a proactive opportunity to unveil ALPA's top safety and security initiatives to the public's media, giving us an opportunity to continue building relationships with the nation's aviation and labor news media. It also conveniently happened shortly after the Miracle on the Hudson.

Although ALPA no longer represents USAirways' Capt. Sullenberger, we did train him in our safety structure. I think we can all agree that the professionalism exhibited throughout the entire ordeal, including the amazing airmanship it took this crew to complete a successful, dual engine failure, water ditching and evacuation, deserves our utmost recognition and respect.

In Congressional testimony, I echo these sentiments. How it takes a highly qualified, trained and professional crew to save the day. We call it doing our jobs, and for a long time now, airline pilots haven't gotten the recognition we deserve.

But Sully and his crew captured the hearts and respect of America and the world. And maybe, just maybe, he renewed the latent pride that beats inside of proud aviators, as well as within their Union Reps. He forced us to look ourselves in the mirror and say, faced with that same situation, I could do that.

Despite being beaten down and locked in bankruptcy-riddled contracts, we felt our chests swell with pride when we watched the news and saw the awe that the world awarded those two airline pilots.

And for pilots, that's been all too rare an occasion, even though we look at each other and we KNOW what our members proudly and professionally face every day in complete anonymity. Take the news about CanJet Flight 918, for example.

When I received the news at 0500 that one of ALPA's crews had been hijacked, I was shocked. As professionals, though, we handle even the most strenuous situations with calm, rational actions—it's why we take training and our Captain's Authority so seriously. Just ask Capt. James Murphy, the pilot in command, who said, and I quote "we did what we had to do, and what we were trained to do. The passengers for whom we were responsible coped so well and that should never be forgotten."

Yes, in the end, pilots rarely come out as the heroes in headlines. In fact, we're much more inclined to decry journalists' false words, such as the *Washington Time's* claim about Obama ending the FFDO program—which wasn't true—or several irresponsible news reports, including a story in *USA Today*, which compelled us to publicly comment on the ongoing NTSB investigation of Colgan Air Flight 3407.

And we will continue to defend our profession, and our members and we will speak out when it is clear that accomplishing the higher goal of creating a safer airline industry is no longer the focus—whether in the news, in the government or in industry forums.

From aviation safety and security concerns to labor relations issues, ALPA has covered the gamut in high profile events such as JPMorgan Conference in New York, the International Symposium in Phoenix, The FAA Forecast in DC, the AirFinance Conference in NY, and several NextGen forums. At the request of

the U.S. Administration, we shared the principles of our safety systems with government and industry leaders in China.

And at the invitation of the State Dept, last night Captain Mary Ann Shaffer and I met with Senator John Kerry and energy and climate experts from 16 nations.

In many of these venues, ALPA remains the only labor rep with a seat at the table. Our participation in these events gives ALPA another avenue to push our strategic initiatives forward.

Take IFALPA, for example. Representatives in our ranks, led by Captain Wykoff and FTDT expert Counsel Jim Johnson, laid the groundwork for new flight-time duty-time regulations coming down the pike at the international level through ICAO this coming November.

This advances our efforts in addressing pilots' number one safety issue: pilot fatigue. Our goals are simple. We want a scientifically-based set of flight and duty rules for North American pilots that provide at least 8 hours of sleep—not just 8 hours away from the cockpit. We want a duty day length based on when you report for duty, not when you're finally called in to fly the aircraft. And we want special provisions for long-range and back-side-of-the-clock flights.

The bottom line is that our pilots fly around the world at all hours of the day and night, 365 days a year. They deserve to have FTDT rules that make sense; rules that apply to every airline pilot, no matter what kind of aircraft you fly.

After all, the regulations haven't significantly changed since they hit the books back in the 1960s. I'm here to tell you, stand by for that change. We are working hard to make that happen. Capt. Rice will address this issue further in

his remarks, as well as include how you and your members can participate in these efforts.

Of course, there's always more you can do, right? I haven't come across a pilot leader who can say no when someone asks them to serve their pilots' needs. And in the end, that's really what this union is really all about.

Our willingness to serve our pilots and our profession drives us to implement the strategic plan initiatives. All of these snippets I'm trumpeting today cover ALPA's vast accomplishments, but the onus of the strategic plan's ultimate goal—re-coupling our pilots to this great union—lies with every ALPA leader.

Simply put, we cannot reach the pilots flying the line out there every day without your help. If all of the achievements, the firsts, the ALPA making history stories that I'm laying out for you today stops with you, then all of these actions are almost for naught.

Robert F. Kennedy once said, and I quote, "Few will have the greatness to bend history itself; but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation."

Well, when the next generation of airline pilots read your chapters, I want them to see how we built a better union—and a better life for our members—by directly taking on our challenges and controlling those core factors within our reach. I want them to read about how this group of pilot leaders bridged the generational divide to connect with every airline pilot within their ranks, ensuring that ALPA will be here for generations to come.

I want them to read about how we followed our strategic plan to succeed in reestablishing our profession and our Union, in spite of all those who have tried to destroy us. The ALPA Leaders in this room today will lead our 55,000 members to success. Our members are Union pilots ready to become organizers

and strikers if pushed by stubborn managers who want to maintain bankruptcy-era contracts.

We will become a force that stands together for those less fortunate and for those whose airlines have failed. ALPA will not succumb—we will not surrender and we will not forget.

Making tough decisions and separating our wants from needs, we've seen many successes, including historic moments—from around the world and within our union—that we have moved the industry forward...in our contracts, in developing safer and more secure skies, and in building a stronger, more effective union.

As we build on that momentum, I want you to stay focused on the plan we set together in October. During this Executive Board meeting, we'll hear further reports from all eight BOD Delegate Committees on the initiatives that we've met thus far, and those on the horizon that will continue to blaze our path to success.

We'll conduct this business using a process initiated by the Strategic Planning Committee, which is similar to the structure we used during the October, 2008 BOD meeting, so most everyone here should be familiar with it. Get out your pens and pencils—I'm going to outline who will cover what in which Committees.

Committee 1, led by Capt. Lee Moak and Paul Rice, will discuss MEC Strategic Planning and hear industry, bargaining, and legislative updates, covering resolutions from BOD Delegate Committees 1 (ALPA Structure), 2 (Collective Bargaining and R&I) and 7 (Government Affairs/Regulatory). It will also take up the Executive Council agenda item on Presidential Severance Transition Benefits.

Committee 2, led by Capt. Jeffrey Barath and Randy Helling, will discuss MEC Deficits and MCF/OCF funding and hear issue briefings that detail 2008's financial results and the 2009 budget, including the grants versus loans provisions that the Executive Council discussed earlier this month. This Committee will cover BOD Delegate Committee 4 items (ALPA Resources), and will take up major contingency fund authorizations for Alaska, Air Canada Jazz, and AirTran.

Committee 3, led by Capt. Jay Pierce and Bill Couette, will discuss proposed revisions to ALPA's merger policy and hear more about communications, membership, organizing, and career security protocol activities, as well as receive a legal update. It will address resolutions from BOD Delegate Committees 5 (Communications, PR and Education), 6 (Legal) and 8 (Membership/Organizing). It will also take up several agenda items, including reports from the Career Security Protocol Committee, the Merger Policy Review Committee and reviews of an Analysis of the Railway Labor Act, the ALPA-NPA merger, and a proposed amendment to the ALPA Administrative Manual.

Committee 4, led by Capt. Dave Webb, Don Wykoff, and Randy Helling, will discuss flight time duty time regulations and listen to an update on our safety and security initiatives, covering resolutions from BOD Delegate Committee 3 (Safety & Security). It will also take up the report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Pilot Fatigue, and consider an amendment to the ALPA Administrative Manual concerning Jumpseat Policy.

With your additional input today in these four Executive Board committees, we'll propose a series of new resolutions that maintains the important work of the strategic plan. As an ALPA leader, I encourage you to fully participate in

this Executive Board meeting by weighing in on the initiatives designed to keep the strategic plan on track.

I challenge you to continue your leadership of our Union, learn more about all facets and issues your union tackles and what it has done for the piloting profession. And I implore you to teach what you've learned to every one of your MEC and Committee members, and then take that to each and every line pilot.

Because together, thousands acting as one to protect all, and tens of thousands building a better future for airline pilots, individually and collectively, with the proud members of 36 airlines in the United States and Canada, in unity and in solidarity, there is only One Union that can say "We Are ALPA!"