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Hello Everyone,

Last week, I sent out an email introducing myself. In case you missed it, my name is Richard Wheeler, and I am seeking the position of your First Officer representative in Detroit. The email was somewhat brief, and I would like to take this opportunity to expand a bit on my position on several key topics.

We've all seen the new (to former NWA pilots) manual philosophy of Plane, Path, People and Performance. This seems to provide a fairly good outline of my views, so I thought I would co-op it.

Plane: Quite simply, we cannot afford to continue to permit the disastrous outsourcing of our flying. Whether it's freighters, DC-9s or anything in between, we have seen that when management speaks of "studying replacements", the replacements are invariably pilots, not aircraft. Every aircraft we allow to be outsourced means fewer Delta pilots, which translates directly into less bargaining power at the negotiating table. The result, in essence, is that we wind up bargaining against these replacement pilots because we have shown that we are willing to trade away our own jobs. Negotiating at that point turns into a game of "what is it worth to you to KEEP the flying", and valuable negotiating capital is spent just keeping what we have, rather than making meaningful improvements across the board. We have to send management the message that we will no longer tolerate the loss of jobs and that further relaxation of scope is OFF THE TABLE.

Besides the overall damage to our negotiating power, the tragic loss of scope impacts each and every one of us on a personal level. For every lost aircraft, we lose pilots, upgrades, transitions and other lost opportunities, each of which costs pilots money and quality of life. Seniority is as much about the number of pilots below you as above, but, as shown by the United/Aer Lingus and the lost of the freighters has shown, the large aircraft are no longer safe.

We need to get the message across to management that givebacks or “flexibility” with scope is a thing of the past. Aggressive enforcement and capitalizing on opportunities to reclaim flying that has been lost should be primary goal of this MEC. Scope is section 1 of the contract for a reason, and there is very little point in being the guy or gal with the highest pay rates in the unemployment line because your job got outsourced.

Path: I think we all have our favorite contract items that we’ve seen slip away over the years. Almost 10 years of constant concessions has ensured that each and every one of us has lost considerable pay, retirement and quality of life. But when we ask for restoration of even the most minor quality of life items, we are often asked “what are we willing to give up in return?” This has a greater impact now that several near and dear items, such as our jumpseat booking window and call in honest policy have been placed to the bottom of the “to do list”. As we approach negotiations in 2012, we need to look at the concepts from each contract to choose the “best practices”, and leave the “not invented here” mentality behind.

The cost of living only has one direction, and that’s up. The time for the continual erosion in our overall compensation must be stopped, and the rebuilding of this profession to commence. This pilot group has moved heaven and earth to make this one of the most operationally successful mergers in history, with corporate benefits into the billion of dollars. That is something we should keep in mind as we move into 2012.

People: Quite simply, the line pilot is the MOST important person. You are the reason that we are here, and it is your needs and desires that drive (or at least, should drive), the direction of the MEC. This is a bottom up organization.

You absolutely deserve to have the latest, up to the minute information. Your input to the process is crucial, and in fact, has proven invaluable in pointing out real-time problems developing out on the line. In the past, mimeographed updates appeared every few months...it is time to embrace the real time, dynamic nature of the communications resources available to us.

Finally, Performance: We often blame management for the failings that have befallen us. While they certainly bear responsibility for success or failure of the business plan, we bear responsibility for what we permit to be done to us. We have often heard the phrase “we didn’t think management would do that”. Such failure of imagination is squarely on the shoulders of your representatives. We have been taught to identify threats and perform error management. It is human nature to make mistakes, but we should step up and claim responsibility and try to

mitigate the errors that do occur. The line pilots have every reason to expect such responsibility from their elected representatives.

While I have no experience with elected ALPA positions, I think I can bring a new perspective to the MEC, and I can assure you that your needs will find a strong voice before that body.

Since my first letter, several folks have asked about me personally. In short, I am a 1998 hire, and have spent most of my career on the DC-9 and was a SO instructor on the 727. I started out flight instructing, came up through the regional airlines, and was previously at Piedmont (Henson). I'm single, with no family, and could spend as much time as necessary to represent the Council 20 pilots in the best possible fashion.

Traditionally, LEC elections have a very low participation. I would like your nomination, and ultimately your vote, to the position of First Officer Representative. But if you can't, get involved with the process and nominate someone who is willing to serve.

If you have any questions, please email at [richforc20@bellsouth.net](mailto:richforc20@bellsouth.net) and I'll be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Fair Winds,

Rich Wheeler