



The Update Message from the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers representing Flight Attendants in the 2339 Local Lodges

Friday, March 27, 2009

Continental's Chairman & CEO Kellner Calls for Re-Regulation for Airlines – Recently Continental Airlines Chairman and CEO Larry Kellner stated that he expects the business cycle to continue its decline and that could lead to job cuts due to fewer paying passengers. Kellner stated in a recent Houston Chronicle article that the 31 year-old era of partial airline deregulation needs to get a closer look. “If the government wanted to re-regulate the business, I wouldn't be opposed to it, he said, cautioning that he wasn't calling for a return to the old, wholesale regulated system when fares were higher and few people could fly. Mr. Kellner also stated that he was open to working with labor leaders to make the process work for both sides. International President R. Thomas Buffenbarger testified on April 24, 2008 before the Task Force on Competition Policy and Antitrust Laws of the House Committee on the Judiciary that “some form of limited re-regulation is necessary if this country has any chance for a safe, reliable, profitable and competitive air transportation industry. Additionally, IAM General Vice President Robert Roach, Jr., stated in a Senate Commerce Committee hearing, May 7, 2008, on the state of the airline industry “Limited re-regulation is the only long-term solution for an industry that is continually seeking government assistance.” Decrying the “sad state” of U.S. commercial aviation, former American Chairman and CEO Robert Crandall June 11, 2008, *in Aviation Week*, declared three decades of deregulation a failure and said that treating airlines like a regulated utility must be a part of a broad solution to their current financial crisis. IAM union leadership has been making this very point over the past fifteen years and it appears that the CEO's of the major U. S. air carriers have had an awakening to the mutual benefits that limited re-regulation could have for both the air transportation business and for the front line professionals that keep the planes aloft.

A New Bidding Screen for Continental Flight Attendants to Debut April 15, 2009. All flight attendants will be required to use the new screen to bid from April 15 through April 21 or 22 (base dependant). If you would like to practice using the new bidding screen the company has provided a sample or test screen that may accessed via the crew room computers. You can access the sample version by clicking on the link for CCS Line Bidding Beta (an icon on the Windows desktop of the crew room computers). [For more information about this new bidding screen, please refer to Inflight Administration bulletin 09-39, dated March 25, 2009.](#) If you have questions, please contact your supervisor or Inflight Administration at 800-421-1789.

District Lodge 142 will hold its Fourth Annual Flight Attendant Conference April 13 thru 16, 2009. This year's conference will focus on a variety of subjects, some of which have been addressed in previous conferences, as well as a special Negotiations module. We are looking for flight attendants that are interested in learning more about their union. Space is reserved for each local lodge, so don't be left out, sign up today. Contact your District General Chairperson or base committee at any base grievance desk and secure your place at this conference. Time to register and conference slots are limited, so don't miss out. We look forward to your participation and input at the conference. Travel will be on Monday, April 13, Conference dates will be Tuesday/Wednesday April 14 and 15, 2009. On Thursday April 16, 2009 (departure day) we will visit the IAM headquarters before continuing onto the airport for travel back home.

COBRA Subsidy Available for Laid-off Workers – Laid-off workers can now get help paying for their health care coverage that is offered through Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA). COBRA is a federal law that allows most laid-off workers to continue their health plan coverage at group rates. Until now, workers have had to pay the entire premium. For many newly jobless families, the cost has been too high. President Obama's economic stimulus bill includes a 65 percent premium subsidy to help eligible workers keep their health care coverage under COBRA. Workers who have been laid off since September 1, 2008, are eligible for the 65 percent subsidy. Premiums would be discounted by this amount and the worker would be required to pay the remaining 35 percent to maintain their health care coverage. The subsidy is available for a maximum period of nine months, and is only applicable to premiums paid after February 17, 2009. The subsidy is not retroactive to previously paid COBRA premiums. Workers who have other group health coverage options, such as through a spouse, or Medicare, are not eligible for the subsidy. COBRA benefits are unavailable if the employer shut down or no longer offers a group health plan. The new law also gives qualified individuals a "second chance" to elect COBRA coverage if they turned it down previously. The plan is required to notify laid-off workers of a second COBRA enrollment period by April 18. Additionally, laid-off workers can change to a plan that costs less than their original plan, if it is offered to active employees. For more information, visit the special Department of Labor website at www.dol.gov/cobra.

National Group Protection Insurance will once again be offered at the Houston base in the



Continental & ExpressJet crew rooms March 26 thru April 1, 2009. Representatives for National Group Protection Insurance will be in the Newark base April 7 – 13, 2009 and again on April 22 – 28, 2009. Underwritten by American Bankers Life Assurance Company, you can elect to have accident; cancer; critical illness; or universal life insurance coverage for yourself and/or your family members. There will be representatives in the crew rooms to explain the coverage being offered for IAM members. District Lodge 142 will notify our members when National Group Protection representatives will be coming to your base for

enrollment. Flight Attendants from all bases transiting through Houston during this time are welcome to enroll.

We would like to encourage all members to attend your Local Lodge business meeting. Each Local Lodge must have a quorum to conduct business. The following is a schedule for upcoming meetings:

Newark: Tuesday, April 7, 2009, 3:00 p.m. at the Renaissance Newark Airport Hotel
LL2339-N business meeting has been changed due to a scheduling conflict with the Flight Attendant Conference that is taking place on April 13 - 16, 2009.

Cleveland: Thursday, April 9, 2009, 1:00 p.m. at 669 North Rocky River Drive

Houston: Tuesday, April 21, 2009, 1:00 p.m. at 15710 JFK Blvd

Guam: Wednesday, April 22, 2009, 2009, 4:00 p.m. at the Airport Conference Room
LL2339-G business meeting has been changed due to a scheduling conflict with the Flight Attendant Conference that is taking place on April 13 - 16, 2009.