

AirTrafficController

Republican victories mean big challenges, high stakes for NATCA

The recent election events have turned NATCA's attention to the U.S. Capitol.



President John Carr, on the subject of legislative affairs, often says, "Aviation safety is neither a Democratic nor Republican issue." But that statement likely will face a stern test over the next two years, now that President Bush has a Republican majority in both the U.S. House of Representatives and Senate.

The elections proved disheartening for organized labor, which had hoped for Democrats to retain control of the Senate and maintain a favorable position to fight the Bush Administration's many anti-labor initiatives. It also means an uphill climb for NATCAvists working on an important list of issues, including privatization.

But Carr is hardly taking a

defeatist attitude. "We've got our work cut out for us, no doubt about that," he stated. "But there's no reason to panic or act like the world is coming to an end – at least not yet. Even though it will make our jobs harder, I have to give credit to the Republicans for staying on message. Voters gave the president a sweeping mandate to enact his agenda."

That could have serious implications for NATCA. The administration has, for the last two years, included budget language about exploring privatization of the air traffic control system and new Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Marion Blakey has refused to rule out privatization during her five-year term. In addition, the administration continues to aim toward a goal of turning over hundreds of thousands of federal jobs to the private sector.

Executive Vice President Ruth

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New FAA Administrator Blakey gives views on privatization, staffing, modernization

The following is a transcript an interview with new Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Marion Blakey.

What do you hope to accomplish during your first term as Federal Aviation Administration administrator?

I could discuss a lot of specifics, but what I think is most important is to ensure our air transportation system is the safest, most efficient and most secure in the world. We are doing an excellent job of this right now, but we were certainly shaken by the events of Sept. 11, 2001 and have been exposed to

some real challenge both from a security standpoint and economically. It's a tall order, keeping our system safe, but it is one I would like to accomplish.

What are your top priorities during your first term?

It's a little early for me to set up specific goals. I'm a big believer in continuity. The FAA has a strategic plan and we have goals we are seeking to meet from both a safety and efficiency standpoint.

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Presidential Perspective

The national election season is behind us and the NATCA election season looms just ahead. As the winds of winter blow across the country so, too, do the winds of change.

For our nation this is a challenging time. The war on terrorism continues unabated, and a possible showdown with Iraq lies just around the corner. The economy is in a precarious position. The equity markets have lost a collective seven trillion dollars of our nation's wealth. The airline industry is still reeling from the effects of the terrorist attacks in 2001 and the accompanying recession. Business travel, the bread and butter of the airline industry, is in free fall and no turnarounds are forecast soon enough to stave off bankruptcy for several carriers. From health care to social security to domestic and foreign policy debates, our country faces many challenges on the horizon.

Our union faces challenging times as well. Although work rule contract negotiations have been complete for 15 of our bargaining units we are still waiting to complete pay negotiations for them. The air traffic controllers' contract expires next summer and NATCA has begun preparations to go to the table.

Staffing in the controller ranks continues to dominate our agenda as retirements and attrition accelerate through the middle of this decade. We know what others don't - that it will take five years of hard work to replace the generation of controllers who are now coming up on retirement.

Privatization will rear its ugly head again as proponents of that failed policy seek out a

more receptive audience on Capitol Hill. The concept of service provision as an inherently governmental function again will be debated in Congress.

Modernization continues but shrinking budgets and new priorities may cause previously funded programs to fall by the wayside. The agency's Operational Evolution Plan has gone from a template to a work in progress, and even some of the Free Flight technologies may fall victim to the budget axe.

"The debate over privatization of the air traffic control system is shaping up to be a very interesting policy deliberation. It will be very difficult for supporters of such a system to run from the failures represented by airspace systems in Canada, Great Britain and many others."

Thomas Jefferson once said, "I find that the harder I work the more luck I seem to have." I find the same principle works for our union.

We are working hard to complete contract negotiations for our bargaining units. While many will tell you the process has been a difficult one I am very proud of the fact that we have put our best teams at the table, negotiated complex and thorny issues with honor and integrity and reached agreement on all but the most controversial subjects.

The staffing debate will

unfold like only these things can. The agency has an opportunity to show foresight and leadership on this issue by reaching agreement with the union on the staffing necessary to operate the National Airspace System safely and efficiently. It also has the opportunity to become infamous should it choose to go alone and inevitably fail.

The debate over privatization of the air traffic control system is shaping up to be a very inter-

esting policy deliberation. It will be very difficult for supporters of such a system to run from the failures represented by airspace systems in Canada, Australia, Great Britain and many others. The new administrator is rumored to be "data driven." If that's the case we should be in good hands because the data on privatization of air traffic control services is voluminous, and almost all of it clearly indicates breakdown, malfunction and economic collapse.

On modernization projects, change is happening so fast

those who say it can't happen are often interrupted by those who are making it happen. The rollout of the Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System platform in Philadelphia is a perfect example of technology deployment that succeeded, exceeding everyone's expectations in spite of naysayers who swore it couldn't be done. For this we owe a debt we can never repay to Philadelphia Facility Representative Kevin Devery, STARS Liaison John Shea, NATCA Members Kevin Bair, Don Chapman, Laura and Rick Heckman, Gary Helms, Danny Mullin and many other NATCA folks.

We should also thank our NATCA engineers, who made this project possible. Having NATCA Members Jim Anzaldi, John Bayonne, Vinny Licata and Anton Mascolo really made the difference. For your contributions, you have our grateful appreciation for a job well done.

Change is inevitable and challenges are here to be embraced. John F. Kennedy once said, "We would like to live as we once lived, but history will not permit it." The challenge we face, both as a union and as a nation, is to ensure that the future glows ever brighter than the past. I look forward to the New Year and I'm grateful that you've chosen to join us as we ride out to find our destiny.

“State of Skies” Summit - discussions of the aviation industry after Sept. 11, 2001

President John Carr summed up the overwhelming sentiment of the *State of the Skies* Summit, which took place on Sept. 26 at the Washington Hilton in Washington, D.C., when he observed, “Every person in this room now longs for the naiveté of the long simple summer of delays in 2001.” This statement opened a day of dialogue on the current state of the National Airspace System. “Even without the impact of the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks, our aviation world was facing many challenges,” said Carr. “Now these are joined by unprecedented security responsibilities, debilitating economic realities and changing priorities.”

The summit opened with a keynote address by Dr. Daryl Jenkins of the Aviation Institute at George Washington University. Jenkins began his speech on a rather somber note, stating, “Will the good old days of aviation ever return? No.” He related the best years of airline profitability took place in the late 1990s, as a function of the dot-com boom. More money flowed through the economy, and as an extension, more business travel, the most profitable echelon of passenger. Jenkins hypothesized that even without the drastic effect of Sept. 11, 2001; the industry would still be where it is today. As the bubble burst on the economy, Sept. 11 occurred, therefore pushing the industry over an edge to which it was already heading.

As a solution, Jenkins stressed that a restructuring of the commercial industry is necessary, with an emphasis on smaller airlines, smaller airplanes, lower cost and lower risk. He also stated that privatization of the Federal Aviation Administration is simply “the wrong issue at the wrong time.” Jenkins opined that privatization shouldn’t even

be on the table; but it seems like a simple solution to a complicated problem to lawmakers. But it is not: Jenkins believes that the FAA needs to remodel not privatize— he feels that asking one agency to be good at regulation and improving technology is too much.

Representatives of the many components of the aviation community attended the summit and took part in three sessions. The

senior vice president of the Air Transport Association; David Plavin, president of the Airports Council International – North



Carr leads a panel that includes representatives from all facets of the aviation industry.

America and Ed Wytkind, executive director of the Transportation Trades Department of the AFL-

CIO. The panel covered such topics as what has changed after last year’s terrorist attacks, if the industry is doing enough to prevent another attack and how the

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Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin

first, moderated by Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin, was a discussion of the current issues facing the industry. The panel consisted of Cheryl Atkins, a representative of the Policy Board for Aviation at the Department of Defense; Charlotte Bryan, the stakeholder liaison at the Transportation



Luncheon Speaker John Nance, ABC News aviation analyst and pilot.

Security Administration; Charlie Keegan, associate administrator for research and acquisitions and director of operational evolution staff at the Federal Aviation Administration; Edward Merlis,

current economy affects aviation. “The fact that every sector on the panel cited security as their biggest issues demonstrates how we are all still coping with the

aftermath of the terrorist attacks,” observed Marlin.

Carr moderated the second and third panels.

The second panel included Peter Challen, the deputy association administrator of the FAA; John Hayhurst, CEO of Boeing Air Traffic Management; Marlin; John Pyburn, director of program

analysis and evaluation at MITRE/CAASD and Sam Whitehorn, general counsel of the U.S. Senate Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation. This session was a discussion of current reality versus future growth in the industry.

Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Vice President Andy Cebula, Lockheed Martin Air Traffic Management Vice President Sue Corcoran, American Association of Airport Executives Executive Vice President Spencer Dickerson, Merlis, National Business Aviation Association Senior Vice President Pete West and General Aviation Manufacturers Association Senior Vice President Barry Valentine comprised the final discussion group. This session allowed the various represented sectors to advocate the priorities of their constituency.

“This summit was the perfect opportunity for all the different facets of the aviation industry to bring their issues and concerns to the table,” observed Director of Strategic Planning and Policy Jose Ceballos.

“Any time representative members of the aviation industry sit down and begin a dialogue on the issues faced by its varied constituencies, it’s sure to be a success,” remarked Carr. “We continue to do everything in our power to ensure that any discussion of aviation is considered incomplete without us. Sometimes that means attending other functions, and sometimes that entails hosting a function like this one. I plan to make it an annual event.”

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I am keen on working with our employees to see where we stand on current issues before carving out new ones. We have a very talented and dedicated group of people. I am extremely impressed by how mission-oriented they are and I have a lot of faith in them.

I would like to point out several things I plan to take into account with this position and its responsibilities. I am a big believer in letting the data drive you. I think it is critically important that we look at the facts, the matrix and the hard numbers to see what is really there, not what we want to see. The agency must be very analytical about where we stand and what we want to accomplish; we have to make discussions based upon that. That goes for our big modernization programs as well as how we function on day-to-day basis.

Another issue is consistency. The FAA has a huge workforce, some 48,000-plus employees across the United States. Consistency and predictability across our offices and regions could improve. We don't want situations where people believe the face of the FAA is constantly changing. A broader initiative for eliminating significant variations from region to region must take place. We must give the public the belief they can count on us. I believe we can strengthen our consistency throughout the FAA by integrating our staff from around the country so we are all on the same page.

Of course, I also want us to strengthen our safety, capacity and efficiency initiatives by emphasizing performance methods, cost accounting and stressing what has already worked successfully.

What are your feelings on privatization of the U.S. air

traffic control system?

The debate about privatization has gone on for as long as I can remember. I feel it is an old discussion that has no momentum at this moment. I say this because of my discussions during the confirmation process with congressional leaders who would be involved if this issue were to move forward. From my point of view, I believe in working with what we have now. I'm coming in here with the belief that we have a very dedicated, highly capable workforce. If we look at more ways to work efficiently and address the moderniza-

tion pro-



New FAA Administrator Marion Blakey

grams that we have, I believe we will succeed in our goals. I am taking the approach that the agency will do this well.

You recently stated to a Senate panel that you would make "airline safety your top priority." How do you plan to do this?

In a broad sense, what I am most concerned about is aviation safety. I come to this job with a strong safety portfolio. Having committed to it for so long it is second nature make safety a top priority as I analyze my decisions. Safety is a

shared responsibility that encompasses the FAA, the airline industry, controllers, pilots, mechanics and all those out there from day to day ensuring the safety of aircraft and the operations system. Runway incursions and other ground issues are just as important to address.

In addition to strengthening our partnerships, which I think are critically important, we also have to aggressively pursue promising technology, both hardware and software. I think this is a crucial way to enhance safety and look more closely at the question of

human factors, which are by far the single largest contributor to accidents. Consequently, we must do everything we can to strengthen education and training.

What are your thoughts on NATCA's push to modernize all air traffic control facilities? Any suggestions on the steps NATCA should take?

I can't tell you how enthusiastic I am about NATCA's commitment to modernization. Aggressively embracing the promise of new technology and stepping up to the learning

and training challenges that are issues on which I really applaud NATCA's efforts. It is absolutely important that our controllers make significant contributions during the beginning stages of modernization programs. I am very impressed by their accomplishments thus far. I believe we are going to have successful deployments of major modernization of terminal environments, due significantly to controllers' efforts. I am looking forward to a partnership with controllers in addressing the new modernization we're planning for the en route environment. A lot of things are coming at us, but NATCA has been right at the table the whole time. I want to see more of that.

The key aspect of modernization is committing the time and manpower to the early stages of the development of various programs. It requires extra effort, but it is important. If you come into the discussion late it causes frustration and costs precious resources we want to see devoted to technology and more training for our workforce.

You've stated that you will "begin aggressively hiring and training air traffic controllers to compensate for the expected retirements of as many as 5,000 controllers by 2006." What is your strategy for doing this?

Right now I am analyzing the situation. I don't want to jump to specific conclusions until I can see the whole picture. But I do not doubt we are looking at a significant change in our workforce. By 2010, some 7,000 controllers will retire. Passing the baton from our experienced controllers on to our new recruits is a critical task, and one we must plan carefully. By

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Congress, the White House, General Accounting Office, the FAA and NATCA all coming to the table and agreeing the retirement bubble is a problem, we can work diligently to combat this problem.

Transportation Secretary Norm Mineta and I are very committed to working with all these groups to ensure the problem of staffing is handled in the best way possible and to make sure that we plan well. Strong leadership is called for on this issue and I'm looking forward to working very closely with NATCA President John Carr and others to make sure we address it correctly.

Under your leadership, "capacity enhancement" will be a critical objective. What are your plans/strategies for implementing this?

You pay a lot of attention to something when you hear it is working effectively. That's what I hear about our Operational Evolution Plan. It's a specific plan with explicit tactics we are committed to pursuing. Air traffic controllers have been involved in this plan from the beginning. I intend to go with a winning strategy and involvement from all effective parties is something we will continue as we improve capacity.

Enhancing the air traffic control system through better technologies is critically important. We also need a smoother and more rapid certification process that enables new technologies and improved aircraft infrastructure. We must do this not only by redesigning our airspace, in which NATCA has played a fundamental role, but also improving our infrastructure on the ground. We must be more committed to pushing for more runways and better taxiways so that the environment in which we work, both

ground-based and in the air, is as safe as it can possibly be and can reach the capacity requirements we know we must meet. We are expecting a 25 to 26 percent increase in capacity demands over the next 10 years. If we follow the OEP, which will increase capacity by over 30 percent, we will get there.

What about airport modernization and security? What role do you see the FAA taking?

From the modernization standpoint, the FAA's Airport Improvement Project has had a substantial increase in its funds. This has made a real difference in the airport community in improving existing runways and building and expanding new ones. Building more runways is the single most effective step we can take to meet capacity. Our efforts

"I feel it (privatization of the FAA) is an old discussion that has no momentum at this moment...I believe in working with what we have now."

there, and in streamlining the approval process to build new runways, are a critical component of what the agency must accomplish. By cutting through the red tape of the approval process, the infrastructure of the system can move forward more quickly, safely and effectively.

Security is a tremendous challenge. We are working very closely with the Transportation Safety Administration to make certain our safety programs are coordinated with its security programs so we don't have diversions or negative reactions. We are working together closely so we understand the

programs it is implementing. This way we can fulfill the FAA's role of enforcement and responsibility in the aviation environment.

What are some other challenges you are facing as the newly appointed administrator? What challenges do you foresee in the future?

Across the board, the challenge remains recovering from the one-two punch of the recession and the events of Sept. 11, 2001. It is an extraordinarily difficult time, but also one in which I am much honored to have an opportunity to work with the FAA, Congress and the administration. It is a great time to be administrator. There are many challenges here and they are all important. When I get up in the morning, there is no question that the work we are doing is critically important.

As for challenges in the future, it's a question of projecting what type of overall society we will have from a transportation standpoint, what needs will be in terms of our country and our global aviation system and planning with a 10, 15, 20-year timeframe in front of us. We must address the capacity needs and safety concerns that we will face. By working closely with controllers, mechanics even the Department of Defense, it can give us more of an advantage. Trying to figure out what the future needs will be is as great a challenge as anything we are facing right now. Then we can

plot a correct path and the technology will be there to join us.

On a personal note, what are your greatest strengths and inspirations?

It is always difficult to be truly reflective. But in terms of inspiration, I'd have to point to my family. I have a very encouraging husband who has been supportive of my career from the beginning. When I told my 15-year-old daughter I was evaluating the possibility of taking the FAA administrator position, she wrote me a letter from camp that said, "Mommy, not only have you always thrived on challenges but must face them. I hope you take the job." That kind of support makes a huge difference. Also, I grew up in the Deep South and my parents always took the point of view that there were absolutely no limitations to my opportunities. For a girl growing up in Alabama in the 1960s, I might not have been so lucky. I feel I owe them a great debt because not only did they ensure I received a great education, but they really made sure that there was no limits on my horizon.

One of my strengths is I work hard to build relationships and create a collegial team environment. A big part of that is communication, which is a fundamental part of a strong management approach. You have to make sure the people around you understand from where you are coming in order to have an effective and productive work environment. I'd like to be known as someone who is fair, someone who listens and someone who tries to make sure that not only that we operate a first rate, cracker jack system but that someone who ensures equity in our system for all those who are operating within.

New and modern Potomac TRACON draws controllers from five Washington-Baltimore area facilities - offers state-of-the-art technology



By 2005, an estimated 28.2 million passengers will fly into the Baltimore-Washington

Metropolitan Area. Carefully watching over the aircraft carrying these individuals are dedicated controllers from Andrews Airforce Base, Baltimore-Washington International, Richmond International, Washington National and Washington Dulles Airports.

Because this area is a major hub for national and international civilian and military air traffic, the Federal Aviation Administration decided to consolidate all five of the airports' terminal radar approach facilities into one large facility called Potomac TRACON. Many are anticipating this facility's airspace will become one of the busiest air traffic areas in the world.

Consolidating the five buildings into one mega-TRACON took careful planning by NATCA and the FAA. "The union has been involved in every aspect of this project - from when it was simply a plan on paper until now," remarked Potomac Facility Representative Chris Sutherland. To combat the enormity of this project, design coordinators separated it into two phases. The first was the construction of the new building; the second was the redesign of the airspace.

Approximately 30 acres of land in Fauquier County near Warrenton, Va., were set aside

for the new 95,000 square-foot state-of-the-art building. According to NATCA Design Representative Jim McAllister, the structure has the most up-to-date air traffic control equipment. "We conquered challenges by designing and incorporating new equipment to replace antiquated technology. Building upon the successes of Atlanta TRACON and Northern California TRACON, we truly are the most modern air traffic control facility in the world," stated McAllister.

Just some of the equipment used at new building:

- ◆ ARTS Color Displays (ACD): radar scopes that use color to differentiate between each controller's aircraft.

- ◆ Automated Radar Terminal System (ART-IIIIE): an automation processing system that allows information from 13 radar sensors inside the facility to be displayed on the ACDs.

- ◆ Electronic Flight Strip Transfer System (EFSTS), allows tower controllers to send flight plan information on departing aircraft from the tower to the associated departure position at Potomac TRACON.

- ◆ Automated Surface Observing System (ASOS) Controller Equipment Information Displays System (ACE-IDS): touch-screen information displays that

enable controllers to receive pertinent air traffic information such as weather, segments, windshear data directly to each position as it updates live.

- ◆ The new Emergency Communications System (ECS) which enhances the voice switch bypass functionality of the rapid deployment voice switch and combines it with tunable radios into one small touch screen display which allows a simple plug-and-play-easy-to-operate system.

With the equipment installed, the next part of Phase One of the Potomac consolidation is ready to begin. Starting on Dec. 14, controllers from Dulles will transfer to the new facility. They plan to operate at the Potomac for a month to test the equipment to ensure it functions properly. Following Dulles, on Feb. 1, 2003 National and Andrews Air Force Base controllers will transfer over, then Richmond on March 1, 2003 and finally Baltimore on April 5, 2003.

Based on seniority, controllers volunteered to work the new mega-TRACON. "It is extremely complicated to move such a large number of controllers because of staffing problems and automation," offered Sutherland. "We are doing this consolidation in stages to ensure a more effective work environment."

Although the complexity of Phase One is astounding, Phase Two proved to be even more challenging. Currently a team comprised of NATCA Washington, D.C., area controllers and management are working to construct an entirely new air route system. The group is made up of individuals who have direct, hands-on experience in working with the current airspace and they will work to design multiple airspace alternatives.

Redesigning the 75-mile airspace around the Washington-Metropolitan area has taken five years and the plan, once finalized, will go into effect one year after Baltimore transfers into the TRACON. By constructing new air routes, NATCA and the FAA hope to provide overall environmental and financial benefits. The new designs are expected to allow both arriving and departing flights to stay higher for longer periods of time. Higher altitudes typically result in safer and more efficient use of fuel. Also, when aircraft fly higher for a longer period of time, it significantly reduces noise.

Along with these benefits, the agency also hopes to "reduce delays, prevent operational incidents and accommodate the projected growth of air traffic in the area," according to an FAA spokesman. Although designers are not sure what the new airspace routes will look like, they will to create more direct routes to and from the airport. "By doing this, we can move more planes into and down from the sky and also reduce fuel costs," says Sutherland.

Controllers are excited to work in the new state-of-the-art facility. "We're all working together. The camaraderie between controllers will be stronger," said McAllister. "By opening up this new facility everyone will reap the awards. It offers controllers the most modernized equipment and necessary information available. It will also hopefully reduce delays for the flying public and provide smoother transitions from area to area during flights." "We hope everyone will come and see our new home. It truly is amazing," concluded Sutherland.

The next Communicating for Safety Conference to roll into Denver, Colo., in April 2003

The next Communicating for Safety Conference is scheduled to take place in Denver, Colo. at the end of April 2003.

Photo Credit: Chris Carter



It is almost time for controllers to bid their vacation for next year. Time once again to set aside a few hours on the schedule to attend *Communicating for Safety 2003* in Denver, Colo. Just as it was last year, if you can come, you can do so on duty time, both for the conference as well as the travel days before and after.

Come join the Safety Committee at the Double Tree Hotel Denver near the old Stapleton Airport and the United Airlines training center on April 29 and 30, 2003. Please plan on attending the two full days. Many people missed out on the last open forum session of this year's conference in Kansas City, Mo., due to travel plans.

The tentative agenda for the *Communicating for Safety* seminar has been created. It includes such topics as the National Transportation Safety Board, National Airspace Redesign, Federal Aviation Administration Operational Evolution Plan, Automatic Dependent Surveillance - Broadcast, Runway Safety, Area Navigation and an open panel with pilot and controller representatives. The agenda and various sign-up forms will

soon be ready for mailing to air traffic control facilities.

If you have contacts with different pilot groups at your facility, please ask for some extra brochures and distribute them to the pilot community with which you have contact. We are working diligently this year to get more pilot attendance to our meeting. We are also trying to secure more vendors to display their wares and show both controllers and pilots what sort of equipment is out there for us to use.

A block of rooms has been reserved for attendees at the Doubletree Hotel Denver. Participants should make their reservations directly with the hotel by calling 303/321-3333. Please call before April 1, 2003 and mention you are with *Communicating for Safety* to receive the special room rate.

The registration fee is \$30 before April 15, 2003 and \$50 after April 15.

Stay tuned to the *ATC SafetyNet* as well as the NATCA and the Safety Committee web sites (at www.natca.org and www.safety.natca.org) for further details. The Safety Committee promises you won't be sorry that you attended.

Air Traffic Procedures Advisory Committee Update

Scott H. Voigt

NATCA hosted the latest session of the Air Traffic Procedures Advisory Committee in Washington D.C., at the national office. NATCA brought an Area of Concern to the meeting in reference to Area Navigation arrival and departure procedures. It had come to the attention of the NATCA National Safety Committee that problems were cropping up with these new procedures. It appears that issues exist with

both the implementation of the new routes as well as training issues in both the cockpit and the control room.

NATCA laid out data that showed where RNAV departure procedures were being flown with a less than sterling record at the last few facilities where the procedures had been put into place. NATCA worked to get a consensus from the group to have the FAA not implement any more RNAV departure procedures until all parties could get

together and work out the safety and procedural issues.

NATCA's Article 48 RNAV Representative Don Porter is continuing to work these issues with the FAA and the users. We are hoping that this little nudge from ATPAC will help Don in getting all of the parties together to fix these problems. To practice our trade, we must be able to ensure that the routes that we assign are flyable, repeatable and something that we can rely upon for positive separation.

If you are interested in what

is happening in ATPAC, please look at the updated NATCA Safety web site at <http://safety.natca.org>. You will find a link to the Federal Aviation Administration's site for ATPAC. There you will find future meeting dates and places, and an extensive section detailing minutes from previous meetings' minutes. It normally takes about three to four months for the agency to post the minutes.

Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System Update

by Steve Kelley
STARS Representative

A lot of negative media attention has generated toward the Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System in the past few months - some of it deserved, some not. Most of it has centered on the inspector general's report as well as the General Accounting Office report. So what is the truth?

STARS is still alive and fairly well. Most of the problems in its reports occurred when the first full STARS software was delivered to El Paso, Texas,

and Syracuse, N.Y. Although it had been through a great deal of testing, controllers began seeing anomalies almost immediately after turning it on operationally. Some of the

problems involved adaptable items –such as duplicate targets (caused by building reflections) and clutter areas. Our capable companions at the Operational Support Facilities fixed these items.

Others problems were more unique to

tendency to be too aggressive in searching for a coasting target. This caused a tag to jump around the scope, latching on to clutter or untagged targets, even after the actual aircraft had landed.

After several weeks of changes, testing,



and more changes, ELP finally began using the FS2+ (baseline) software on Oct. 12. After some time of operation, the software appears to be performing

quite well. The most prominent involved the new tracker that STARS uses. Although much more accurate at smoothly following an aircraft, it had a

quite well. With a few more functionality changes needed for Philadelphia, Pa., we should be ready to deploy STARS to its new TRACON and turn it on by Nov. 17.

Air traffic control's intricacies and subtleties - different from each perspective

By John Glasserman

Some recent discussion threads on the "members-only" bulletin board on the NATCA web site made me think about the intricacies and subtleties within the world of air traffic control.

The intricacies are the hard and fast procedures and phraseology, seemingly the "science" part of air traffic control. The intricacies are, for the most part, standardized and are applied more rigorously than the subtleties, which are those unique and (sometimes) controversial concepts and improvisations that each and every controller employs across a much wider spectrum.

The "subtleties" are those bits and pieces that we can create on an as-needed basis depending on the situation at hand. This is the "artistic" part of air traffic control. We tend to cling to our subtleties with a tenacity, which, more than likely, would be unfathomable to the individual observer who is uninitiated in the ways of air traffic control.

These intricacies and subtleties comprise the "whole" of the controllers' domain. Each of us sees them from a slightly different perspective, and, as a consequence, puts them into practice in his or her own way.

It has been noted time and again that the air traffic control procedural handbook (FAA Order 7110.65, colloquially known as the "Air Traffic Control Bible"), containing the "intricacies" noted above is, in many respects, a vague and ambiguous document. More than

discretion (ability to initiate those "subtleties") in application of procedures provides the controller the ability to handle traffic in a more orderly and expeditious manner than might be possible without it. All of this can be accomplished while still maintaining the highest level of safety within the system.

Sometime in recent history, a few optimists-at-heart determined the air traffic control system, with appropriate automation, could

run itself and the air traffic controllers would only be needed to monitor the performance of the automation devices and intervene if equipment failed. The machines would provide clearances and instructions; sequence and space arriving aircraft; issue necessary weather and airport conditions information and perform a plethora of other tasks needed to keep the system operating. In other words, these machines would

"These intricacies and subtleties comprise the whole of the controller's domain. Each of us sees them (intricacies and subtleties) from a different perspective, and, as a consequence puts them into practice in his or her own way."

be programmed with all of the rules making up the "intricacies." Such programming would enable them to perform like air traffic controllers.

While some of those concepts, admittedly, are practical applications for automation (and are being acted on to the present day), most of the grandiose plans to fully automate the system appear to have fallen out of favor and the realization is present that the air traffic controller cannot and must not be taken out of the loop. It's impractical to believe that all of the automation in the world could ever begin to match the air traffic controller's penchant for develop-



Every controller uses both hard and fast procedure and their own creativity to successfully guide planes.



The air traffic controller can never be taken out of the loop.

likely, this is intentional and is not necessarily a bad thing. The differing degrees of ambiguity allow for practical interpretations of its provisions. Indeed, it's a large part of what makes the system function as remarkably well as it does. Having a certain amount of

ing and implementing subtleties, the part of air traffic control without which the system would fall apart.

Photo Credits: Peter Cutts

continued from page 3

One major issue still at large involves the position symbol and target. Since the position symbol still sits over the target tophat (primary symbol and the beacon slash), it is often difficult to see one or both. With the DEDS and FDADS displays controllers clearly see the target as it blooms and the position symbol when the target fades. But STARS and CARTS does not imitate the "bloom and fade", which means the target and symbol must share the same pixels. Thus, if you enhance the symbol you do not see the complete target and if you enhance the target you cannot always read the symbol.

This has been the problem that has been put in front of the CHI Team the most. They

next month to investigate and test its options.

Budget cuts have hampered

any questions or concerns involving your facility. The memorandum of understanding we signed with the Federal Aviation Administration entitles these representatives to attend site meetings, affording union members representation and STARS experience.

We are working on a NATCA STARS website that will have updated information. Until then, please contact either STARS Representative Steve Kelley(starstower@natcacd.org) or Gary Helms starstracon@natcacd.org) for more information.

"The memorandum of understanding signed with the Federal Aviation Administration entitles these representatives to attend site meetings, affording union members representation and STARS experience."

have spent numerous hours looking at colors, outlines, shades, shadowing – you name it, they've tried it. The CHI Team is meeting once more

our development, but we are pushing to maintain the waterfall. NATCA currently has regional representatives for STARS who will assist you in

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New Orlando tower's 345-foot height is not all that impresses

Towering high above the lush green palm trees of Orlando, Fla., is the nation's tallest air traffic control facility. The structure rises to an unprecedented 345-foot tall, 126-feet higher than its predecessor.

The \$28.7 million facility includes an 11,700 square-foot base building which houses administrative offices and the most up-to-date technology available to controllers. "The new tower is very luxurious and provides us with excellent visibility," said Orlando Tower Facility Representative David Johnson. Controllers work with the Airport Surveillance Detection Equipment-X Band, the latest in ground radar systems and the new touch-face lighting system, which replaces the flip switch.

With traffic steadily increasing and a new runway due for completion in August 2003, the airport outgrew its old tower. To keep traffic flowing and provide efficient service for passengers, the Orlando Aviation Authority decided to build a new tower.

Although the tower stands impressively by itself, plans are underway to build a new "fast track" TRACON by late 2005. By "fast tracking" the project, the new TRACON will be completed in four years instead of the usual five. "We absolutely want both facilities connected," said Johnson. "It is much more convenient." A decision on whether to build the two facilities

together or build the TRACON on a separate piece of land will be made some time in November because the aviation authority is still evaluating the financial aspects of the project. Also, a new blackblast deflection wall will be built in light of new security concerns since the 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States.

While tower waits for its future addition, the tower and old TRACON remain busy handling over 326,000 operations annually. Its height allows controllers to clearly see many of the area's landmarks such as the John F. Kennedy Space Center's shuttle launch facility, which is approximately 35 miles to the east of the tower, and Walt Disney Land's Epcot Center's golf ball-like structure. "We can also see tons of lakes and rivers from the tower's top which makes for a very nice view," said Johnson. "As soon as we have all our security issues approved, we'd love to have everyone come for a tour."

The Orlando Tower and TRACON are known for superior handling of air traffic. With its motto of "raising the heights of excellence," 77 NATCA members helped the facility win awards such as Southern Region Facility of the Year for 1992, 1995, 1999, and National Facility of the year for 1999. Most recently the tower won the 2001 Air Traffic Control People's Choice for Productivity and Excellence Awards.

Photo Credit: Aerophoto



Sunshine State Shootout raises over \$11,000 to benefit local charity



Volunteers sell raffle tickets at the opening pool party.

NATCA members converged yet again on Ft. Lauderdale, Fla., this September to play some golf, take in the Florida sun and raise money for the Ann Storck Center, a local non-profit human service organization that benefits individuals with severe and multiple developmental disabilities.

"This year's tournament was a resounding success," said Don Dunivant, a controller at

Orlando Tower and the organizer of the Southern Region golf tournament. "We raised \$11,775 and had a whole lot of fun doing

it." The money raised tops last year's donation by over \$4,000.

"Once again, NATCA has made a meaningful difference in the qualitative life experience of those we serve," observed Ann Storck Center Executive Director James McGuire. "You are a credit to your union and most importantly, you are the best friends our infants and toddlers have known in the past five years."

The event kicked off with a welcoming reception, sponsored by NATCA Benefits and Dental Plans, and also

included a golf course luncheon sponsored by the American Association of Orthodontists. Attendees took part in a marshmallow drive, where they paid to hit a large marshmallow with a golf club of their choice for a grand prize of two round trip tickets on Air Canada Worldwide. The drive raised over \$700.

"We always have a great time," remarked Dunivant. "I



Attendees enjoy the closing luncheon.

would like to thank Scott Burks, Rick Crose and Donny David (of Orlando Tower) for all of their help with the tournament."

If you missed the September tournament, the Southern Region Spring Tournament, entitled "Music City Mayhem," is scheduled to take place in Nashville, Tenn., on May 23, 2003. Please contact Dunivant by e-mail at ddunivant@aol.com for more information.

In accordance with the constitution of the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, Article VII, Section 3, we, the National Election Committee designate the following dates and timetable for the 2003 NATCA National Elections.

Section 1 - General Provisions

A. Elections will be held by referendum, and all balloting will be conducted by the use of a secret ballot. Write-in votes will not be permitted. If balloting is conducted via a mail in ballot, the following procedures shall apply: the official ballot return envelope will have on its face an official number assigned to each member. A list of names of the membership, together with the corresponding official numbers, will be made available to the National Election Committee of the Association for the purpose of checking, at the time of the ballot count, the voting eligibility of the members whose ballots have been returned. Notwithstanding any provision to the contrary in these by-laws, all ballots will be returned to a depository predetermined by the National Election Committee to ensure the secrecy of the ballots, and will be held there until the time designated for the counting of such ballots.

B. Except as otherwise specifically provided herein, any

protest or challenge to the conduct of a National Election must be made in accordance with Article VII, Section 5 of the National Constitution.

c. Any further appeals must be filed with the Secretary of Labor pursuant to Title V U.S.C., Section 7120, and applicable regulations.

Section 2 - Nominations

A. Nominations shall be accomplished in accordance with Article VII, Section 2 of the National Constitution. Nominations must be in writing and must be delivered via certified mail to: National Election Committee at the Association Headquarters no later than 5:00pm EST on April 1, 2003. All candidates for National Office must be active members in good standing for at least one year prior to the close of nominations.

B. No member may accept nomination to or be a candidate for more than one office in any National Election.

C. The Association Headquarters will be charged with the safekeeping of these nominations, and will turn them over to the National Election Committee.

D. The acceptance of the

nomination will be dated and contain the following information:

1. The full name of the candidate and, if desired, any special name to appear on the ballot.

2. The candidate's facility, home or mailing address and social security number.

3. The title of the National Office for which the candidate is nominated.

4. A certificate in the following form, signed and dated by the proposed candidate:

"I hereby accept the nomination for the office of _____ . I certify that I am not now, nor have been for the past 13 years, convicted of or served any part of a prison term resulting from conviction of robbery, bribery, extortion, embezzlement, grand larceny, burglary, arson, violation of narcotics laws, murder, rape, assault with intent to kill, assault which inflicts grievous bodily injury, or violation of Title II or III of the LMRDA Act of 1959 as amended, or the Landrum-Griffin Act, or conspiracy to commit any such crime."

E. Nomination acceptance must be received at the Association Headquarters no later than 5:00 pm EST on May 1, 2003. Nomination acceptances not received by this time will be considered invalid.

F. The National Election Committee will determine whether the candidate has correctly submitted their nomination acceptance and possesses the necessary qualifications for the proposed office. The National Election Committee will prepare a report listing each candidate under the office they are seeking. Each candidate will be marked "qualified" or "disqualified" according to the findings of the National Election Committee. Where a candidate has been marked "disqualified" the reason must be stated in the report. The report will be signed by the National Election Committee and submitted to the National Executive Board.

G. When the National Election Committee disqualifies candidates, they will be notified immediately by certified mail at the address listed on their nomination acceptance of the reason(s) for disqualification. Disqualified candidates will have the right to file a written appeal to the National Executive Board within 10 business days of the receipt of the disqualification notice. The National Executive Board will review the appeal and reply within 5 business days of the receipt of the appeal.

Section 3 - Balloting Procedures

A. The National Election

Election Rules

Committee will ensure the proper and timely preparation of ballots without partiality as to candidates. The names of the candidates for each separate office will appear in alphabetical order. If balloting is conducted via a mail in ballot, the ballots will contain voting instructions consistent with the provisions of these by-laws.

B. The ballots prepared at the direction of the National Election Committee will be the only official ballots. No others may be used. A sufficient number of ballots will be printed and distributed. The National Election Committee will maintain a record of the ballots distributed.

C. Ballots must be sent to a predetermined depository, which will be paid for by the Association. Secrecy of the ballots must be assured. No signature of any voter or other distinguishing mark will appear on the ballot. A signed or marked ballot will automatically be ruled ineligible.

D. No member's ballot will be counted unless the member is in good standing as of 15 days immediately preceding the closing of the balloting.

E. Ballots will be mailed to the membership on June 30, 2003. Ballots must be received by 5:00 pm EST on July 30, 2000. Ballots not received in the depository by this date will not be counted.

F. Members will be enti-

tled to a duplicate ballot and receive same, provided they notify the National Election Committee via the Association Headquarters. Envelopes used for duplicate ballots will be identified as "Duplicate Ballot" and of a different color other than the envelope used for the original ballot. Duplicate ballots will be counted unless the original and duplicate ballot mailed to a member are both cast, in which event neither ballot will be counted.

G. The National Election Committee will supervise the conduct of the election and take measures they deem necessary to assure a fair and impartial election.

Section 4 - Ballot Collection, Tally Procedure

A. A member of the National Election Committee will on the morning of July 31, 2003, proceed to the depository and obtain all the ballots. Ballots will be retained in the custody of the National Election Committee until such time as they are checked and counted.

B. The National Election Committee is charged with the tally of all ballots and the preparation of a report, which sets forth in complete detail the results of the election, including a complete accounting of all

ballots and reconciliation of the ballots with rosters and verification lists of membership. The report will clearly detail all discrepancies discovered and will contain recommendations for the treatment of such discrepancies. All members of the National Election Committee will sign the report without prejudice.

C. The National Election Committee will commence their work on the same day that the ballots are collected and will complete their work as quickly as possible. The report of the National Election Committee will be filed with the Association no later than 48 hours following the completion of the count.

Section 5 - Runoff Procedures

A. In the event of a runoff election, The National Election Committee will supervise the mailing of ballots. The ballots will be mailed no later than 16 days after the National Election Committee has ruled on challenges or protests of the election or, if there are no challenges or protests within 16 days after submission of the National Election Committee's report.

B. The runoff election will be conducted in accordance with Section 4, of this docu-

ment. Marked ballots will be mailed to the membership and due back into the predetermined depository no later than 30 days after the date of the mailing. In the event that the 30-day deadline falls on a weekend or holiday, the next regular business day will be designated as the deadline for receipt of returned ballots. The National Election Committee will meet the following day to tabulate ballots and announce the results of the runoff election.

Section 6 - Installation of Officers

A. New officers will take office on September 1, 2003, or after the National Election Committee and the National Executive Board resolve all protests pertaining to their office, whichever is later. In the result of a runoff election such officers will take office 30 days after the results of the runoff election are finalized.

Dee Daniel, IAD
Dan Ellenberger, A80
George Lloyd, A11
Mike Patterson, EVV
Harold Warncke, MCO

Marlin said, "We have a lot of work ahead of us, but we are well prepared for it," and proposed a new way of looking at the political landscape.

"For years I have been talking about supporting members of Congress that support us. We have always courted friends on both sides of the aisle and most of those friends were re-elected," Marlin commented. "Southern Region Vice President Rodney Turner summed it up perfectly, when he talked about a NATCA majority. We need to look at the NATCA majority exactly the way the parties do - 218 in the House, 51 in the Senate. We should track candidates that are sure NATCA voters, likely NATCA voters and anti-NATCA voters."

Marlin continued, "With such a close division and so many close races, members of Congress are learning they need to vote for what is right for their district first. A safe and efficient air transportation system is good for every congressional district."

NATCA Legislative Committee Chairman Randy Weiland said his

initial reaction on election night was one of fear and trepidation. But that quickly changed.

"There has never been an obstacle NATCA hasn't overcome, either legislative or in the political arena or in labor relations," he remarked. "I'm confident in our leadership and our membership. We can overcome this. It's a difficult task ahead of us. But I believe we will prevail."

"My long term goal is to put enough pressure on Congress to put privatization into the ground. If we can accomplish that in a Republican-led government, we'll never hear about it again."
NLC Chairman Randy Weiland

Weiland believes the most immediate task is to shore up NATCA's support base with its many Republican friends. Additionally, he added, NATCA should search out Republicans where the relationship is not as strong. Those efforts will extend into February's annual *NATCA in Washington* event, where Weiland intends to place as many Republican speakers at the podium as possible, building on a theme

from last year when influential Republican House Committee Chairmen Hal Rogers of Kentucky and John Mica of Florida spoke.

"My long-term goal is to put enough pressure on Congress to put privatization in the ground," Weiland stated. "If we can accomplish that in a Republican-led government, we'll never hear about it again."

NATCA's Air Safety Investigators attend training in Norfolk, Va.



The NTSB's Bill English gives a presentation at training.

When an aviation accident occurs, the National Transportation Safety Board takes many perspectives into account during its investigations. Crucial to inquiries involving air traffic control services are the objective viewpoints of air traffic controllers, engineers, technicians and airport representatives. Currently, NATCA provides 35 Air Safety Investigators to help with NTSB investigations, with a minimum

of two representing each of the nine Federal Aviation Administration's regions. Most of these dedicated volunteers

also have experience in various aviation safety and accident prevention committees and participate in local accident prevention programs.

The FAA requires that these ASIs attend annual aircraft accident investigation training courses. The most recent of these took place in Norfolk, Va. The course began Oct. 15, and continued over a three-day period. The ASIs shared their investigative experiences and lessons learned at accidents in the field during the previous year.

Several guest speakers gave informative lectures and presentations. Lynda Bottos, a private human factors consultant; Commander Francis of the Naval Safety Center and Bruce Landsberg, the director of the Air Safety Foundation shared their insight on the various aspects of aviation safety and accident investigation. And this year, the workshop enjoyed attendance by representatives from the Air Line Pilots Association. ASIs often work with ALPA during investigations.

NATCA speakers at the event included Bill Shea of Dallas Fort Worth Center and Pete Trono of Los Angeles Center, who addressed lessons learned at such investigations as the crash involving American Airline 1420 in Little Rock, Ark. Several representatives from FAA headquarters, including Dan Diggins of the Office of Accident Investigation and Christine Soucy of Air Traffic Investigations

briefed the ASIs on the agency's role in the process. Also, Bill English of the NTSB Air Traffic Control Section spoke of the board's expectations of ASIs. "The highlight of the workshop was NTSB Board Member John Goglia's discussion," remarked ASI Committee Chairman Darren Gaines. "He gave his opinions and expectations of the group with characteristic humor and insight."

The training also gives ASIs the opportunity to speak with other investigators from the aviation industry. "Because we are spread out all over the country, meeting once a year allows us to share incidents and experiences from our own region," observed Gaines. "This is very helpful in the ongoing process of improving our abilities."

NATCA Cease and Desist Issues

The Federal Aviation Administration recently has been implementing changes in the workplace without first negotiating these changes with NATCA. The union has sent several letters to the agency, requesting a cease and desist from executing these changes until the parties can meet to discuss and negotiate any foreseeable impact to bargaining unit employees. The agency has complied with some, but not all, of these cease and desist requests. NATCA is in the process of investigating which requests have been followed. NATCA will file an unfair labor practice charge against the FAA for each instance where it is determined that it is not complying with the request to negotiate prior to implementation.

Controller-In-Charge on Midnight Shifts Arbitration Decision Set Aside by the Authority

On June 4, 2001, Arbitrator Paul Fasser ruled in favor of the union regarding the issue of assigning controllers-in-charge mid-night shifts at centers. The arbitrator ruled the FAA violated its own regulations when it failed to assign CICs supervisor duties on mid-shifts at centers when supervisors were not available. While the agency argued that each center is different and many positions are combined during mid-

shifts, Fasser found "an entire Control Room cannot be considered to be a single operational area." Fasser stated repeatedly "a supervisor or CIC must be physically in each operational area."

On Nov. 7 the Federal Labor Relations Authority set this award aside. It ruled the award affects management's right to determine its organization under 5 USC 7106(a)(1). The FLRA explained in part, "Management's right to determine its organization under 7106(a)(1) of the statute encompasses the right to determine the administrative and functional structure of the agency, including the relationship of personnel through lines of authority and the distribution of responsibilities for delegated and assigned duties."

NATCA is in the process of reviewing the FLRA's decision to determine the possibility of appeal.

Scheduled Arbitrations

1. PATCO Five Percent (Grievance No. LR-2000-0000-NAT), Advocate - Labor Relations Staff Representative Dennie Rose - Nov. 20
2. Self-Referral (Grievance No. LR-2001-0010-NAT) Advocate - Labor Relations Staff Representative Melinda

Kim - Dec. 5

3. Medical Disqualification and Work Assignment (Grievance No. EA-2002-ZNY) Advocate - NATCA Member Chris Boughn - Dec. 13
4. Removal (Grievance No. NM-2002-0000-BOI) Advocate - Labor Relations Staff Representative Tracy Levine - Jan. 17, 2003
5. Eight vs. 8.5 Hour Workday (Grievance No. EA-2002-0090-N90) Advocate - Levine - Jan 10, 2003
6. Official Time on Holidays (Grievance No. LR-2001-0011-NAT) Advocate - Outside Counsel Bill Osborne - Feb. 18, 2003
7. Official Time for Arbitration Witnesses (Grievance No. LR-2001-0012-NAT) Advocate - Labor Relations Research Staff Representative Shannon Grant - Feb. 25, 2003
8. Overtime By-pass (Grievance No. LR 2002-0003-NAT) Advocate - Osborne - March 17, 2003
9. FAA's Withdrawal of Consent Form Agreed to by Parties, Used in Conjunction with Drug Testing (Grievance No. LR-2001-0005-NAT) Advocate - Contract Tower Specialist Tom Bertelsman - March 25, 2003
10. Use of Compensatory Time (Grievance No. LR-2001-0001-NAT) Advocate-TBD - April 30, 2003

NATCA in Washington takes place in February 2003

Next year's *NATCA in Washington* will be held from Feb. 23 until Feb. 26, 2003 at the Hyatt Regency on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C.

For more information on this event, please visit the "Legislative Center" on the members-only website.

16th annual Skifest to push off end of February 2003

Ski season is right around the corner, and you can ease the need to speed down the slopes by signing up to attend the 2003 NATCA Skifest in Lake Tahoe, Nev., from Feb. 22- March 1, 2003. The total cost is \$625 for seven night's lodging, lift tickets and all group functions.

Please contact the NATCA Southwest Region office at 817/540-6661 for more information.

Houston Softball Tournament is around the corner

It's that time again - time to play some softball. The Houston

Softball Tournament will take place May 3-4, 2003 at PJ's Softball Park in Houston, Texas. The entry fee is \$300 - it is due by March 15, 2003. If you decide to join after March 15, 2003, the fee is \$375.

For more information, please contact Joe Ray Morre by phone at 281/296-7494 and 281/513-7494 or by e-mail at joeraydream@msn.com.

What's new on the NATCA web site

If you haven't done so yet, make sure you re-register for the "members only" section of the new and improved NATCA web site. Simply go to www.natca.org and click on the "request access" link. You will be asked to provide your membership number. If you do not have this information, please call the national office at 800/266-0895.

While you're exploring the site, make sure you check out the NATCA History book, written by Author Paul McElroy; the NATCA Holiday Ornament and available NATCA trophies, plaques and awards, located in the "highlighted links" section.

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- Interview with the Administrator
 Take a look at what FAA Administrator Marlon Blakay had to say in an *Air Traffic Controller* interview.
- Election Rules
 Learn the rules for NATCA's next election.
- ATC SafetyNet
 Check out the latest edition of the safety and technology newsletter.

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