

The Air Traffic CONTROLLER

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NATCA in Washington 2001 - working together to fight privatization

"You are among the most politically savvy members of one of the most powerful unions in government. The message you send this week can create the focus, maintain the momentum and define the aviation debate. You have considerable power to influence and persuade," said Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Jane Garvey at the union's annual legislative conference, *NATCA in Washington 2001: Air Traffic Controllers – Shaping the Future*, held at the Hyatt in Washington, D.C., May 14-17. This sentiment echoed throughout the week's activities, as union brothers and sisters sought out members of congress to spread NATCA's messages of anti-privatization, modernization and retirement. And as testament to the growing power of the union, the 2001 NATCA lobby week was the first to garner national press coverage, with CNN, *Aviation Daily*, Reuters and *Aviation Week* featuring the event.

Great Lakes Region National Legislative Committee Representative Richard Ulmes remarked, "This was probably the largest lobby week we have ever held. The interest in the union-wide issues is overwhelming. It's a very exciting time to be involved." The event hosted speakers such as Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta, Air Transport Association Senior Vice President Ed Merlis, Sen. Max Cleland, D-Ga., Reps. Jim Matheson, D-Utah, and Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawaii, Canadian Air Traffic Controllers



(l to r) FAA Administrator Jane Garvey, President John Carr, Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin, Air Transport Association CEO Carol Hallet and FAA Deputy Director Monte Belger at the reception.



National Legislative Committee Chairman Alan Clendenin introduces the National Legislative Committee on lobby week's opening day.



President John Carr and wife Jill pose with Hawaii controllers at the reception.

Association President Fuzz Bhimji and Garvey, among others. "The speakers were informative, yet extremely enjoyable," stated Ulmes.

One of the union's most important issues, privatization, was a major theme addressed throughout the event. Mineta offered, "I do not sup-

port in any way the privatization of the (air traffic) system." He reiterated the Department of Transportation's commitment "to working with you to solve aviation problems" and went on to state union members' input is essential and spoke of the "unprecedented level of cooperation" between the members of the aviation industry. Mineta highlighted continuing modernization efforts and addressed the issue of delays, elaborating, "We have a vested interest in closing the gap between capacity and demand while preserving safety." Controller David Baratta, Denver Center remarked, "His position on privatization will be very hard for lawmakers to get past when considering removing the agency from government hands." Controller Corey Retzlaff, Sioux Falls Foss Field Tower agreed, "He has incredible integrity; he is doing the right thing, following his own beliefs and not allowing a republican administration to influence him."

Bhimji added a sense of urgency to the membership's feelings about privatization as he relayed the situation for controllers in Canada's privatized system, owned by NAV CANADA. He told the story of the removal of the Canadian ATC system from government control in great detail, from the reasons the controllers originally supported it to its results. He described the current situation of minimum days off, 11-hour shifts and mandatory overtime, and how it affects controller

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4 Awards Seattle controllers receive valor award for actions during Feb. 28 earthquake.

5 Issues Executive Vice President Marlin faces privatization foes at NATA convention.

9 Outreach President Carr visits top newspaper editorial board to spread NATCA's messages.



PRESIDENTIAL PEN

JOHN S. CARR

Legislative activism is a way of life for NATCA, and this month I'd like to tell you more about the very important work we are doing in the legislative arena.

Of course, it's easy to key in on this subject when our showcase, *NATCA in Washington*, just concluded. This premier event brings over 300 activists to Washington, D.C., for three days of training, briefings and footwork on Capitol Hill. This year's speakers were as noteworthy as they were diverse, ranging from the secretary of transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration administrator to several key members of Congress and airline representatives. Sen. Max Cleland, D-Ga., graced us with his humor, and Congressman Neil Abercrombie, D-Hawaii, was forceful and passionate.

An event like ours would not have been possible if not for the work of dozens of key employees and activists. The National Legislative Department and the National Legislative Committee worked together with volunteers and other staff to ensure the lobbying effort would go off without a hitch. Everything from the accommodations to luncheons and receptions to speaker requirements and constituent needs was handled with style and class.

The results were astounding. NATCA members made huge inroads on our issues and recruited solid support. Staffers and members alike were impressed with the dedication of our activists, their knowledge of the process and their commitment to their profession and to their union. I couldn't have been prouder of the membership and their hard work and dedication.

Our legislative agenda is a full one, and a short synopsis of some of the issues we continually work is probably in order.

NATCA supports S. 871, the Federal Air Traffic Controllers Annuity Computation Act of 2001. Actually,

our good friend Sen. Cleland introduced the bill on our behalf. S. 871 would change the Civil Service Retirement System annuity computation to allow air traffic controllers to receive a two percent annuity for years of service after 20. This gives controllers the same annuity that is afforded to both federal firefighters and law enforcement officers.

NATCA supports the Truthfulness, Responsibility and Accountability in Contracting Out Act, H.R. 721, which corrects several longstanding problems and inequities in the contracting out process. Specifically, H.R. 721 would temporarily suspend new federal service contracting until agencies establish reliable reporting systems to track costs and savings from contracting out, prevent contracting without public-private competitions, and subject contractor work to public-private competition. The bill has 158 cosponsors, and a hearing is scheduled for June 28.

NATCA supports the Federal Employees Benefits Equity Act. The bill would allow air traffic controllers under the CSRS and the Federal Employees Retirement System who have completed 20 years of service but do not satisfy the age requirements, and are separated from service (not for cause), to retire and receive the enhanced annuity. The bill is supported by the administration.

NATCA supports amending the CSRS to allow air traffic controllers who reach the separation age of 56 years to work until they have completed their 20 years of service. Under the FERS and CSRS, other groups subject to mandatory separation (firefighters and law enforcement officers) are allowed to continue working until they have completed their 20 years of service. NATCA is working to get language attached to the FY2002 Treasury-Postal Appropriations bill to correct this inequity.

NATCA supports my candidacy to the FAA Management Advisory Council. Congress established the MAC under the Federal Aviation Reauthorization Act of 1996, and reaffirmed its creation in AIR-21. The MAC provides advice and counsel to the FAA administrator, and functions as an oversight resource

for management, policy, spending, and regulatory matters under the jurisdiction of the FAA. There is a seat on the MAC for one of the union leaders representing air traffic control system employees, and we believe that seat should go to our organization.

Some of NATCA's biggest legislative battles lie with issues that have long simmered on the congressional burner. Contracting out is a perfect example. NATCA is opposed to the contracting of air traffic control facilities. For the past two years, language has been included in the Senate-passed transportation appropriations bill to expand the Federal Contract Tower program to 70 Level II and III Visual Flight Rules towers and to privatize oceanic operations. While NATCA has been successful in eliminating this language, the issue continues to resurface. In fact, at a House Appropriations Sub-committee hearing May 10, the Department of Transportation Inspector General Ken Mead once again stated his support for expanding FCT program and privatizing oceanic operations. We will continue to educate members of Congress and industry representatives to see that this does not happen.

And finally, we spent some of our time on the Hill refuting those whose political agendas lead them to stretch the truth or attempt to obfuscate the facts. A perfect example is the Controller-in-Charge program. In spite of participating on the CIC Workgroup, the Federal Managers Association now seeks to disassociate itself from this program and discredit the proven track record of success the program enjoys.

NATCA strongly supports the CIC program that allows specially trained air traffic controllers to act in a supervisory role. The program has allowed the FAA to increase the controller-to-supervisor ratio without impacting the safety of air traffic operations. The CIC program is an important component in a collective strategy to improve productivity and efficiency while providing cost savings to the agency.

The DOT IG Ken Mead noted in his 1999 Audit Report that the CIC program would not have an adverse

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FEEDBACK

The FAA's Acting Administrator for Air Traffic Services Steven Brown wrote the following letter to Mark Dill, NATCA national ADS-B liaison, ARN-100, in appreciation for his outstanding efforts in support of the ATS Capstone Readiness Review.

I would like to express my appreciation for your outstanding performance in support of the ATS Capstone Readiness Review on Dec. 20, 2000. On Nov. 18, 2000, I directed an ATS Test Team to conduct a review of the Capstone Initiative prior to the Jan. 1 implementation of radar-like services in Bethel, Alaska. As a member of the Capstone ATS Test Team, you were asked to develop and deliver a White Paper that included potential operational issues and recommendations. In order to complete this task, you participated in the development of review criteria, reviewed technical and operational documents and participated in a series of technical interchange meetings with Capstone program personnel. Finally, you supported briefings to me and other FAA senior executives on the ATS Team's findings.

Due to the short deadline and the complexity of the assignment, the success of the ATS Capstone Readiness Review was dependent upon dedicated, hard-working top-level professionals. You exhibited all of these qualities with an enthusiasm that was inspiring to the entire team. The ATS Test Team's White Paper was comprehensive, professionally written and accurate. The quality of your efforts is impressive considering that the White Paper was completed less than one month after I assigned the task.

Because of your dedicated efforts and your professionalism, ATS conducted a rigorous readiness review of the Capstone initiative, and the decision to commence radar-like services in Bethel, Alaska, was made with a high degree of confidence. Thank you, again, for your outstanding performance.
Steven J. Brown

The manager of the ATC Simulation Branch, ACT-510, at William J. Hughes Technical Center, Atlantic City International Airport, New Jersey, Adam C. Greco wrote this letter to NATCA President John Carr in appreciation for the exceptional work of NATCA Representative Kevin Auredt at his facility.

In the last several months we have been working very closely with NATCA representatives and full performance controllers who are assigned to the administrator's CHOKEPOINT initiative for the Newark Airport. We are working with Washington Center, New York Center, Philadelphia Tower and the Newark and La Guardia areas of the New York TRACON and conducting a four-part simulation, which will test and validate the airspace redesign created by the controllers for Newark Airport.

During this tenure we have developed excellent working relationships with all of the participant controllers but I would like to bring your attention to one in particular.

Kevin Auredt, A.T.C.S. and vice president of NATCA local, Washington Center, distinguished himself to my employees (both federal and contractor) and staff with his honesty, sincerity and concern for people and the task at hand. We like to think that we extend ourselves to everyone, but Kevin returned that generosity with a tangible expression of gratitude after the Washington Center study concluded the week of March 19. Kevin sent plaques in formal recognition of 10 employees. The recipients accepted the plaques with appreciation and surprise. It was an extremely thoughtful gesture and I feel that his actions should be brought to your attention. We believe it reflects positively on your leadership and organization.

Sincerely,
Adam C. Greco

PRESIDENTIAL PEN

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impact on the safety of air traffic operations. In fact, while the FAA has expanded the use of CIC, operational errors while a CIC is on duty have dropped from 10 percent in FY2000 to eight percent in FY2001.

The CIC program is designed as a cost-saving measure for the FAA. Projected savings from the program are \$75 million. Since supervisor ranks are reduced through attrition, savings are realized through transfers and retirements. NATCA continually seeks ways to enhance safety and improve efficiency. The CIC program is a successful example of this.

So you see, lobby week is just the tip of the iceberg for NATCA's legislative activism. Our staff is dedicated to representing your interests on Capitol Hill every single day. You can help by contributing to the NATCA Political Action

Committee and by staying informed and engaged on the issues that affect us. You can rest assured that at the national level we will continue to pour time, energy and resources into ensuring that your future, and your family's future, remains a bright one.



John S. Carr

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morale, retention and consequently, safety. He stressed how the fatigue of the overworked controllers compromises safety. "It's very frightening," said Controller Patti Brown, St. Louis Tower. "Hearing him speak brought home the message for me; it made me realize the issue of privatization is closer to reality than I thought.

Sen. Cleland expressed his gratitude and unwavering support to the controllers, stating the country owes a debt of gratitude to them. He detailed his new legislation, S. 781, which will give controllers the same retirement annuity as federal firefighters and law enforcement personnel. Cleland elaborated, "By improving benefits, I feel we can encourage the most experienced controllers to stay."

Controller Michael Poisson, Atlanta Tower remarked, "I have been impressed with his actions and I was even more so once I heard the enthusiasm in his speech. He is doing so much for the union."

The fact that privatization was such a common theme at the event was not just a coincidence. "Lobby week showed us that opinions regarding privatization are shifting. We have successfully changed the debate from privatizing the ATC system to examining the real fixes such as building more runways. These solutions would not have been brought up without NATCA's efforts," concluded NATCA's Legislative Director Ken Montoya.

NATCA in Washington '01



(above) Eastern Region Washington area controllers group with Rep. Frank Wolf, R-Va., at the reception.



(left) Rep. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y., poses with Eastern Region New York area controllers at her office.



(above) Rep. Tom Udall, D-N.M., joins SW Region controllers. (below) North Carolina controllers speak with Rep. Melvin Watt, D-NC.



(left) Ronnie Shows, D-Miss. visits with Southern Region controllers.



(left) President J. Carr stops to chat with SW Engineer J. Duncan and AGC Nat. Rep. Z. Hymes.



Secretary Mineta presents five Seattle controllers with Award of Valor

Feb. 28 was a day like any other in the air traffic control tower at the Seattle-Tacoma International Airport. The sky was blue and the sun shone brightly. Controllers directed traffic as usual without a thought of what Mother Nature had up her sleeve, but then the tremors began.

"I thought it would pass. We were just shaking a little. I didn't think anything of it," says NATCA Sea-Tac Fac Rep Brian Schimpf.

Unfortunately, the rumblings became more and more violent eventually registering a magnitude of 6.8 on the Richter scale. Glass started breaking. Equipment turned over. At this point most people would have evacuated the premises.

Although the situation seemed to be

getting out of hand, three air traffic controllers and two managers stood their ground. Because of their dedication, Schimpf, NATCA Member Feliciano "Bud" Pangan, Operational Supervisor Debra Hart, Deputy Manager Jamie Erdt, and Controller Sheila Furlong received the highest recognition for civilian employees for acts of heroism and courage involving great personal risk, the Award of Valor.

On April 20, Transportation Secretary Norman Mineta presented these courageous men and women with the Award of Valor for ensuring safe, normal air operations during and following the Seattle, Wash., earthquake. "As the quake shook the control tower, these brave men and women remained calm and focused on avia-

tion safety in the face of a difficult emergency. I commend them for their exemplary performance," said Mineta.

When asked how he felt about receiving the award, Schimpf simply answered, "Wow!" Schimpf, along with Pangan and Hart felt it was a great honor, but it was not just for them.

"A lot of people did an outstanding job - technicians, people on breaks and other controllers. Everyone helped out. I feel like I'm a representative for all the people there," says Hart. Schimpf agreed by saying, "It shouldn't have my name on it. It should say 'This award goes to Mr. and Mrs. Controller.'"

Marlin clarifies union position on privatization at industry convention

Summer is the busiest time of the year for air travel. Add to that the years of escalating popularity and the result is an air system busting at its seams. A spotlight of media attention has focused on the aviation industry in recent months, with Congress attempting to solve the problem of delays with legislation, and industry leaders trying to work together from the inside to correct the situation. Consequently, scrutiny of the issue of Federal Aviation Administration privatization has increased, as people search for any possible solution to the frustration that plagues the skies.

Ruth Marlin, NATCA's executive vice president, clarified the union's position on privatization at the National Air Transportation Association Strategic Issues Breakfast on May 2 in Long Beach, Calif. NATA represents aviation business service providers. Marlin sat on a panel, which included Langhorn Bond, former FAA administrator, and Robert Poole, director of transportation at the Reason Public Policy Institute. Poole is one of the most vocal advocates of privatizing the FAA, and served as a transition liaison for transportation for the Bush administration.

"I'm glad I had the opportunity to represent NATCA because it allowed me to clarify the union's position to the business aviation sector of the industry," said Marlin. In her opening remarks, she explained one of the

union's concerns is that privatization could restrict business and general aviation access because major carrier air lines would receive priority, because they generate more revenue. "Our current problem, accommodating the explosive growth in air travel is one of infrastructure, not just technology," Marlin asserted. "I don't believe the answer to congestion lies in shutting some users out of the system." Marlin fears that taking the FAA out of government hands would cause this user restriction, citing the privatized air systems in Australia, New Zealand and Canada as examples. Marlin argued the solution to the problems of the National Airspace System lies in giving the existing reforms time to work. She explained the necessity of the industry to build runways, taxiways and gates in order to develop greater capacity. Changing regulations or mandating equipment is not the answer.

In a separate meeting, Poole inquired why NATCA had changed its position from its support of United States Air Traffic Services, which turned the FAA into a federal corporation to that of opposition to any form of commercialization. Marlin replied that NATCA's support of corporatizing the FAA was based on two specific tenets, first, it included a pay reform, and second, it removed the aviation trust fund



Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin speaks at the Annual NATA Convention Strategic Issues Breakfast.

from the federal budget. NATCA believed supporting corporatization was the only way to reach these goals at the time.

These concerns were subsequently removed through other channels; the pay system was reclassified upon an agreement with the agency was the result of FAA reform legislation, and the separation of the aviation trust fund was provided for in AIR-21, the Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century. When this occurred, NATCA altered its position. Poole clearly understood the reasoning.

"This country not only has the busiest and most complex air system in the world, but also the safest and most sophisticated," said Marlin. "Can we improve the system? Absolutely. However, privatization is not the answer. The FAA can improve its service of safety and efficiency within its rightful place in the federal government."

Aviation industry leaders update Senate committee on modernization

NATCA President John Carr asserted the union's commitment to solving aviation delays in a May 10 Senate Aviation Subcommittee hearing. He testified on a panel of aviation industry leaders including Federal Aviation Administration Administrator Jane Garvey. Carr delivered a simple message to the subcommittee, "We are working harder than ever to be a part of the solution."

Carr detailed how NATCA has joined together with other aviation organizations to step up modernization efforts following Garvey's evolution - not revolution strategy. Carr stated, "Our union is working day and night with the FAA to move new technologies

into the workplace as quickly, efficiently and safely as possible." He testified that NATCA has representatives on over 65 technical projects, and will continue to lead both the agency and the industry into the 21st Century.

At the top of his list of successes in modernization projects was the recent memorandum of understanding between NATCA and the FAA to work together on the National Airspace Redesign. "The NAR will review, redesign and restructure our national airspace to efficiently and effectively meet the needs of customers and service providers while maintaining high standards of safety," said Carr.

Although he stated privatization has

no place in a discussion of air delays, he maintained the constant significance of preservation of government oversight of air travel. Carr emphasized that air traffic control is so intimately related to the public interest as to mandate performance by federal employees. "Air traffic control is an inherently governmental function. The U.S. system is a national treasure that demands thoughtful, proactive decision-making that will result in real, lasting improvements in procedures, processes and infrastructure. Privatization of this system will never be the answer because the safety of air travelers is not for sale," he concluded.

Union joins the agency in MOU to determine airspace redesign goals

Confirming their commitment to addressing the challenges facing the air travel system, NATCA and the Federal Aviation Administration entered into a memorandum of understanding, teaming up to correct the design of the country's airspace. NATCA President John Carr signed the MOU on March 6, the day after the House Appropriations Transportation Subcommittee hearing attended by FAA Administrator Jane Garvey and Department of Transportation Inspector General Kenneth Mead, among others. Carr specified in this hearing that one of the proactive steps that NATCA would take to improve the problem of delays was to reach an agreement with the agency on airspace redesign. Carr gladly reported the progress on this initiative as well as others to the subcommittee at a May 3 hearing.

The National Airspace Redesign defined in the MOU contains two fundamental types of projects, one that optimizes the current structures, and one that develops new structures incorporating technological and conceptual enhancements, as they become available. These projects will be based on increasing safety, efficiency and capacity. It also empowers the Airspace Liaison Team, Regional Office Focus Leadership Teams, Facility Focus Leadership Teams and Facility Design Teams to deal with matters of develop-

ment and testing on a basis of consensus. NATCA has one full-time airspace liaison, 11 regional representatives and about 350 controllers nationwide who are involved in the project.

"I believe the answers to a lot of questions with respect to airspace redesign, with respect to chokepoint sectors, with respect to oversaturation, are within the workforce I represent," said Carr. "They're at the point to service delivery and I think they are uniquely qualified to give the answers that the agency seeks on airspace redesign. I am committed to continuing to work toward the goal of a clean sheet of paper approach of redesigning the airspace."

When detailing the progress made in other key issues, Carr also stated that NATCA has been working closely with the agency to maximize efficiencies gained from the addition of choke point sectors into the National Airspace System as well as participating in all products of the Free Flight Phase One Teams. "We are working day and night with the FAA to move new technologies into the workplace as quickly, efficiently and safely as possible," Carr commented. "NATCA currently has representatives on 65 technical projects. We are directly involved in every technology project from its inception." In addition, NATCA has opened up

constructive lines of communication with the Air Line Pilots Association, airlines and airport operators.

NATCA has also begun to look into safe and responsible changes to the requirements for separating aircraft. Carr expressed his wish for NATCA to join with the National Transportation Safety Board, NASA, pilots, FAA and others to examine the possibility of safely reducing the separation standards. He recently visited Professor John Hansman from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, who is evaluating separation standards. Hansman's data supports NATCA's position on the issue, showing that while separation standards have remained unchanged, radar performance has improved five-fold.

Carr is also seeking to be nominated by President George W. Bush to fill the labor seat on the Management Advisory Council. The council was created in 1996 when Congress passed FAA reform. Last year AIR-21 provided a labor position in the MAC. But the MAC has already met several times without having filled it. The MAC provides advice and counsel to the FAA administrator and functions as an oversight resource for management, policy, spending and regulatory matters.

New retirement legislation raises some concerns among members

The legislation introduced by Sen. Max Cleland, D-Ga., S. 871, which amends the annuity computation for controllers in the Civil Service Retirement System and establishes equity with federal law enforcement and fire fighters, created a stir among some enrolled in the Federal Employees Retirement System. Will anything be done to better their retirement system?

"The thing to remember is that CSRS and FERS retirement systems are two completely different animals. You cannot compare them or their benefits," answered NATCA Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin. "What the union is trying to do

with S. 871 is legislatively fix a discrepancy in the system."

NATCA is seeking to raise the annuity computation by two percent for every year CSRS controllers work over 20 years, making their retirement annuity the same as federal firefighters and law enforcement. This is a fairness issue that has the lucky side effect of creating an incentive for controllers to stay in their jobs longer, helping stave off an encroaching retirement wave.

The FERS annuity computation is already equal to that of federal firefighters and law enforcement personnel. The union has no plans at this time to seek any increase in retention incentives for FERS controllers through legislation. A possibility of working on any issues with retirement compensation in the future through collective bargaining does exist.

"CSRS air traffic controllers deserve equal retirement annuities in the eyes of the law," said Marlin. "This is a very important bill for us and it is crucial that we support each other as we encourage its passage."

Controller Retirement Survey

The United States General Accounting Office will conduct a survey of air traffic controllers to determine their feelings on retirement. Expect to see the questionnaire in your mailbox mid-June.

Congressional hearing examines possible solutions to problem of delays, Swauger testifies

In the last 20 years, the steady increase in air travel has pushed the current National Airspace System to the limit. The regularity of delays in the nation's airports has everyone, including controllers, extremely frustrated. But steps are being taken to alleviate these delays. In the name of progress, the members of the aviation industry have come together to support a new bill that will allow air carriers to discuss their schedules. Although this will not solve all the problems that plague air travel, it is a sign that industry leaders want to find solutions.

In this spirit, 16 members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Aviation Subcommittee introduced H.R. 1407. The bill would authorize the secretary of transportation to grant antitrust immunity to the airlines, allowing them to meet and discuss their schedules, which may reduce flight delays. Antitrust immunity has been granted to the airlines twice before, in both instances delays were alleviated.

Former Air Traffic Controller Dick Swauger, who now works in NATCA's Safety and Technology Department, recently testified at the hearing on H.R. 1407. Swauger repeated in his testimony NATCA's position that aviation delays are a multi-faceted problem. Just as there is not one cause, there is no blanket solution or quick fix to the problem. Capacity enhancements in the air traffic control system, airport capacity and capacity management are the three key factors.

"This legislation is an important step in the right direction in the area of capacity management and the airlines should be applauded for their proactive participation. Like the controllers, they are actively engaged in the search for solutions," remarked Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin.

As for capacity enhancements in the system, Swauger testified that controllers stand ready to help. "Over the last three years, the FAA has replaced or upgraded most of the major components of the air traffic control system. Our system can no longer be charac-



Former Controller Dick Swauger testifies before the House Transportation and Infrastructure Aviation Subcommittee.

terized as 'outdated and antiquated,'" he stated. "However, modernization is an ongoing process, and NATCA will continue to work with the agency to move new technologies into the workplace as quickly, efficiently and safely as possible." But Swauger also pointed out that these new technologies and upgrades, while ensuring a safe, reliable system, will only increase capacity a fraction as much as the construction of new runways. The FAA's Airport Capacity Benchmark Report 2001 reaffirmed this fact.

The FAA's report on capacity at the 31 busiest U.S. airports outlines in detail how controllers are meeting and often exceeding the capacity at the busiest airports. New technologies and procedures will increase capacity of these controllers an average of five percent by 2010. But new runways could increase capacity by 30-60 percent.

"Our motivation is to move aircraft as safely, efficiently and quickly as possible," Swauger testified. "The longer a delayed aircraft is in our airspace or occupies concrete on the ground, the more difficult our jobs become."

Bargaining Unit News

Two years ago, the Federal Aviation Administration moved transportation functions from sites in each of the nine FAA regions to the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City, Okla. As these roles were centralized, the NATCA members who held these positions had to transfer into other departments. This year, the agency is considering relocating the functions responsible for processing travel vouchers to the MMAC. This raises concern that there are only so many departments into which one can transfer, and if the FAA continues to consolidate these functions, NATCA members could begin to lose their jobs. Moreover, this could result in less efficient support for controllers.

The Administration of Regions and Centers currently houses the logistics, accounting, budget and information resource management divisions in each of the nine FAA regions. The offices assist controllers with activities such as equipment purchase, vouchers, security, inventory, paying bills and training programs.

If the agency continues to integrate these vital responsibilities, controllers may not receive as efficient assistance as they would if the ARC personnel were in their regions. "The expertise and experience is located at the regional offices," said ARC/ABA National Representative Carmela Newberry. "They are already qualified in giving attention to details and customer support service on a daily basis to controllers in each state. This cannot be done in an expedient manner if they are centralized."

Help these NATCA members dissuade the FAA from centralizing their jobs away. Contact Carmela Newberry at 817/222-5498 or 817/247-3209 to find out how you can get involved.

"TRACON" author, Paul McElroy, writing NATCA's history

Paul McElroy is writing the history of NATCA. To ensure everyone has the opportunity to give his or her input into the book, certain questions he would like answered will be placed in the fac rep mailing, newsletter and www.natca.bbs.

This month's questions are:

1. Why do you believe people join NATCA?
2. What does NATCA mean to you?

Please send responses to Paul McElroy at paul@japphire.com.

Carr, Blackmer speak at media seminar on safety and air traffic control

"Safety is our business, and business is good," stated NATCA President John Carr to an audience of journalists and aviation industry members at the Aviation Safety Alliance media seminar entitled "Safety and Air Traffic Control." Bill "Blackie" Blackmer, NATCA's director of safety and technology, also attended the May 4 seminar. The two spoke on a subject that every controller knows well, the safety of the flying public.

"It's pretty rare to be the head of any organization that has a perfect record, but I'm here to tell you that we are just such a group" said Carr. "Our job is to get airplanes off the ground and into the air, and then get them out of the air and back down to the ground." Carr then added the punchline, "I am proud to report that as of today, we haven't left one up there yet." He went on to speak of the initiatives NATCA takes to maintain that spotless record. He touched upon several technical projects in which NATCA is closely involved including the partnership with the FAA to redesign airspace, the effort to review aircraft separation standards



President John Carr gives a rousing speech at the Aviation Safety Alliance media seminar.



Director of Safety and Technology Bill "Blackie" Blackmer (at left) participates in a panel on safety and air traffic control.

and recent work on minimizing the number of operational errors.

Carr also commented on the issue of privatization, reiterating NATCA's position that it is a proven failure in other countries and it is a threat to the safety

of everyone who flies. He remarked that privatization would in effect turn air traffic control into a corporation where the bottom line is dollars and cents, not safety.

Blackmer discussed enhancing air traffic control safety as a member of a panel. The group included Melissa Baily, director of airspace standards for the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association, Peter Challen, deputy associate FAA administrator for Air Traffic Services, John O'Brien, director of engineering and air safety for the Air Line Pilots Association and Jack Ryan, the acting senior vice president of operations and safety for the Air Transport Association. They discussed such topics as oceanic procedures, Automatic Dependent Surveillance Broadcast and the necessity of more runways.

The Aviation Safety Alliance sponsors educational seminars at various locations around the United States. These programs for journalists are intended to provide understanding of aviation safety issues so that they might be promoted in the media.

Union campaign results in the recruitment of 342 new members

The results are in! NATCA's "Member-Get-A-Member" recruitment campaign was a success. Three hundred forty-two new members joined the already 13,800 members of the NATCA family.

Between March 1 and May 1, union activists encouraged non-members representing all bargaining units to join. For their efforts, those who signed-up one new person received a choice of either a 100 percent cotton with the union's logo, black embroidered polo shirt or a set of four NATCA logo etched glass beer steins. Those recruiting two new members received their choice of either briefcase or a NATCA logo embroidered denim jacket. Ten recruiters "went for the gold" and brought three new brothers and sisters into the union:

- ◆ Mike Anderson, Albuquerque Center
- ◆ Michael Baur, Atlanta Tower
- ◆ Lyle Burrington, Albuquerque Center
- ◆ Rich Campbell, Houston Tower
- ◆ Bill Grant, Portland Tower
- ◆ Don Hill, Albuquerque Center
- ◆ Monica Holguin, Engineer-Western-Pacific Region
- ◆ Andy Nahle, Engineer-Western-Pacific Region
- ◆ Melissa Poces, Chicago Tower
- ◆ Mary Ann Phillips, Engineer-Southwest Region

These individuals will receive a \$100 Gold NATCA

Merchandise Gift Certificate.

When asked what strategy was used to reel in new members Campbell replied, "It was fairly easy! I just told them to get involved. Don't just pay your dues; make sure you take an active roll in the union. It's worth the money. In fact it is a real bargain."

Federal Aviation Administration controllers increased their membership by 211 people. All other affiliated bargaining units grew by 131 members. The Southwest Region had the greatest amount with 76 recruits, with the Western Pacific and Southern Regions following closely behind.

The FAA engineers enrolled 39 new members. National Engineers Director Jim D'Agati said he is very excited about the growth since March. "My goal is to achieve the same rate of membership as our controller brothers and sisters within the next two years. I believe this will enhance NATCA's ability to be a strong leader within the aviation community in the future," says D'Agati.

"This was a great opportunity for NATCA members to reach out and communicate with one another. Without the hard work and dedication of everyone involved, we would have never reached such lofty goals," said Membership Director Lewis Zietz. Zietz also commends the member sponsors. "Their dedication was unbelievable. Thanks so much."

Bush budget ensures full funding but sounds alarm on privatization

While the Bush administration's first federal budget proposal satisfies NATCA's hopes of full funding for AIR-21 and the Federal Aviation Administration, it also keeps the privatization issue very much alive.

The budget includes \$6.886 billion for FAA operations, a 5.7 percent (\$570 million) increase over fiscal year 2001. In addition \$2.9 billion is proposed for modernizing air traffic control capital assets.

Air traffic funding is to receive a \$7 million increase for runway safety programs. The request for facilities and equipment is \$2.914 billion, for airport grants \$3.3 billion and for research \$188 million.

"We are more than pleased with the budget for FAA," Legislative Director Ken Montoya said. "In AIR-21, we have a three-year plan. We've been saying how much we want the FAA to have the opportunity to succeed, that there's no need to reinvent the agency every year. We now have a road map toward making the system work."

But while the Bush budget helps NATCA fight the argument that privatization of air traffic control would ensure steady streams of funding,

there is alarming language in the budget that keeps privatization on the front burner.

The budget states, "over the next year, the administration will work with the aviation community and Congress to develop a plan of action for improving the nation's aviation record. In particular, the administration will examine the success that various nations, including Canada, have experienced with individual air traffic control systems owned and operated by private companies."

What is troubling to NATCA is the identity of one of the key players behind the scenes of this budget language: Robert Poole of the California-based think tank Reason Public Policy Institute.

"We believe the study is already compiled and it looks a lot like Poole's report, 'How To Commercialize ATC,'" said Policy Director Jose Ceballos. "Poole was a member of the Bush transition team in the area of transportation and is an advisor on this subject."

Publicly, NATCA has stated it shares the administration's concerns about delays and looks forward to finding concrete solutions. NATCA also encour-

ages a fair comparison between Canada's and the United States's systems and is confident the results will show privatization does not address safety, capacity and efficiency.

Internally, the Bush study has prompted a renewed focus by the national office on NAV CANADA. The initial discovery has uncovered evidence that it continues to be a bad deal for members of the Canadian Air Traffic Control Association.

According to Mike Murphy, an Ottawa-based aviation safety consultant and former head of air traffic control in central Canada, "The motive (of NAV CANADA) is to save money and make it more efficient but efficiency often works at the expense of effectiveness. In our business, effectiveness is otherwise known as safety."

NATCA's message will continue to be one of support for full funding of AIR-21 and the FAA while emphasizing that privatization has no relevant place in discussions about how best to improve and modernize what is already the safest and most sophisticated system in the world.

NATCA's messages delivered to nation's top newspaper editorial boards

NATCA is in the midst of an educational outreach program to the aviation community based on three themes: solutions, safety and privatization. The goal is to convey the message controllers are working hard to solve the nation's delay and capacity issues in its national campaign to stop privatization.

The program involves a series of meetings between NATCA President John Carr and three sectors. First, Carr is meeting with editorial boards of national dailies who have expressed interest in the privatization issue - pro or con. Second, Carr is talking to leaders and prominent voices of the aviation community including academia, think tanks, consultants and government officials. Finally, NATCA is taking a proactive approach toward media coverage for controllers and their

issues.

On April 19, Carr traveled to *The Boston Globe*, a publication receptive to NATCA's position of the need for runways in light of long-running efforts to expand the capacity of Logan Airport. The newspaper asked Carr about a myriad of issues, ranging from Poole's report on commercializing air traffic control to Free Flight and satellite navigation.

One question was, "Won't Free Flight relegate the controller from symphony conductor to watchman?" Carr's responded with, "Free Flight is a wonderful idea. These kinds of tools will enable us to squeeze the last five to 10 percent of capacity out of the system. The Federal Aviation Administration is working as our partner. But until we pour some more concrete, these technical solutions will add only five to 10

percent more capacity. If there was a silver bullet, I would have fired it."

Carr traveled to meet with both the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Sun-Times* on May 23 and many of the same subjects arose, mixed with an in-depth discussion about the urgent need to expand that region's capacity through either more runways at O'Hare or regional and even brand-new airports.

"In our minds, the third airport, while it may remain part of the political debate, is not the quickest route to reducing the capacity and infrastructure problems in Chicago," Carr told the editorial board. "The quickest route out of those problems is another runway at O'Hare. O'Hare has been very very busy for a very, very long time. It's the straw that stirs the drink in the National Airspace System."

Denver controllers pave way for union members in parking debacle

The new Denver International Airport opened six years ago to much expectation and hope. The controllers were excited and proud of the new facility. They took part in a great deal of the planning, from the tower itself to many of the procedures. "We were very enthusiastic," said DIA Tower Controller Mike Coulter. "The airport was controller designed and we were a part of things from the beginning. We assumed that would continue." But the union members soon hit a snag. Although NATCA had originally negotiated parking in a covered structure close to the facility, the controllers soon learned they were to park in the long-term designation over two miles from the control tower.

At first glance, one could underestimate the inconvenience of this situation. Parking is one of those things usually taken for granted. But when the controllers learned it would take them between 30 and 40 minutes to arrive at their workstations from the

garage, they would not receive handicapped spaces and they would have to wait in long lines to exit the airport, they decided this had to change.

The controllers contacted NATCA and attempted to negotiate alternate parking with the Federal Aviation Administration. The FAA representatives refused and the union filed a grievance on March 1, 1995, one day after the airport opened. The matter came to national arbitration in January 1996. In March 1996, the arbitrator issued a decision in favor of the union. He ordered the agency to provide 30 spaces for controller parking in the covered parking structure close to the tower. But the situation remained the same.

In May 1996, the NATCA local filed an unfair labor practice because of the FAA representative's refusal to honor the arbitrator's decision. The issue went through six years of legal rigmarole, including hearings by the Federal Labor Relations Authority and the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals who in 1999

ordered mediation. At each step, the agency representatives refused to comply, but the controllers did not give up. Coulter remarked, "We were not going to back down. Every time they would say 'no,' we would push harder."

Finally on April 10, the FAA representatives and the city of Denver signed an agreement that allowed the FAA to build a new covered parking area for the controllers. The FAA also agreed to pay for the controllers to park in the current short-term covered parking until construction of the new building was complete.

The Denver air traffic controllers won their struggle with firm resolve and determination. But they also feel that in upholding union principals they have helped others. "Many other people have benefited from our struggle here, and that is the most gratifying part," said Coulter. "We like that we have paved the way for our union brothers and sisters. They can learn from our experience, and not make the same mistakes."

New Honolulu facility unique: contains tower, TRACON and center

Along the white sand beaches of Hawaii lies one of the most unique air traffic control facilities in the United States. The Honolulu facility houses not only the tower, but the TRACON and center as well.

Previously, Hickman Air Force Base hosted just the Honolulu Tower/TRACON. The CERAP (ZHN) was located in Diamond Head State Park on the island of Oahu. Because of local pressure, the Federal Aviation Administration moved the CERAP to its current location and returned the park to the state. Ultimately, in 1995, a relocation project was approved to combine the Honolulu CERAP and Honolulu Tower/TRACON into one extended building on the air force base. This facility would also contain the Hawaii Pacific Management Office (HIP-SMO).

After the groundbreaking ceremonies on March 14, 1998, the transformation of the 50,000 sq. foot building into a 70,000 sq. foot facility began. David Washino, local coordinator of the project and NATCA engineer, said the biggest challenge was trying to make a schedule to be completely relocated to the new facility by 2001. Knowing this project had to stay on a tight deadline, the FAA decided to try a new procedure called Design-Build Fast Track. This procedure enabled the FAA to hire two companies under one contract and finish the project in a more productive manner. Ralph M. Parsons Co., from Pasadena, Calif., was hired to design the building and Kiewit Pacific, out of Omaha, Neb., was in charge of construction.

While dealing with all the excitement of consolidation construction, controllers were also handling the installment and training of new equipment. The

Rapid Deployment Voice Switch, RDVS, as well as the Mico-EART controller workstation (MCW) were installed. The new facility also has the Dual Redundant Power Distribution System (DRPDS), which is the latest power system available. Consolidation of the equipment and the building, as well as training, was completed on April 25, 1999.

Although Phase Two of the project is continuous, the most hectic part was completed on Jan. 10. All air traffic functions including en route, TRACON and tower were performed successfully from the Honolulu Control Facility (HCF) located at the Hickman Air Force Base.

The relocation task took more than just the effort from architects and construction workers. NATCA air traffic controllers, engineers, and AOS members participated on many of the work group to help complete monumental move. "User input was a priority at all times," says a spokesman from the Honolulu facility. "We tried to have a member working on all aspects of the transition."



Artist's rendering of the new Honolulu facility.

LR REPORT

National grievance filed against Federal Aviation Administration for requiring a bargaining unit employee to participate in a respiratory survey, allegedly a requisite of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. NATCA's investigation resulted in the discovery that the survey is not obligatory and participation should have been on a voluntary basis under Article 50.

On May 15, FAA Deputy Assistant Administrator of Labor Relations Ray Thoman committed to provide NATCA with an advance copy of all videos in order for the union to have opportunity to comment before bargaining unit members review them.

The national arbitration on assigning Controller-in-Charge during mid-shifts was sustained with back pay to May 30, 2000.

Stoves: The agency would like to remove stoves from towers with a single means of egress based on a report from the National Fire Prevention Association (who are not regulatory). There was a discussion May 15 with Ray Thoman about the issue. Removing of the stoves is an FAA initiative and OSHA is not involved. The agency has offered to replace the stoves with convection ovens; however, they have not shown an adverse impact. NATCA maintains its position and will go before the Federal Services Impasses Panel to decide this issue.

PATCO Five Percent Differential: NATCA is arguing disparate treatment and is moving forward to arbitration. Deputy General Counsel Mike Doherty is the lead.

Dues: NATCA disagrees with an agency position that employees may withdraw as a member on their anniversary. Western Pacific Region filed a grievance and the union is moving forward to arbitration. ATX Liaison Mike Hull and General Counsel Susan Grundmann are the leads.

Night Differential: NATCA consolidated a number of local issues into one national grievance and is moving for-

ward for arbitration. Labor Relations Representative Melinda Kim is the lead

Use of Comp Time vs. Annual Leave: NATCA filed a national grievance on this issue and the union is moving forward to arbitration. Deputy General Counsel Mike Doherty is the lead. The Eastern Region recently worked this issue and awaits a decision from the arbitrator.

FSIP Smoking Order Enforcement: The issue is in the facilities in cities with no smoking ordinances. NATCA is going to arbitration. Labor Relations Representative Lorri Hayes is the lead.

Article 99: A national grievance has been filed stating training is not an operational requirement/necessity and it asks what sort of training constitutes operational requirement/necessity. General Counsel Susan Grundmann is the lead.

Flexible Spending Accounts Article 87 Workgroup: The workgroup finished its work and now the agency's position is it has no authority to implement its program. President John Carr sent a letter to the agency stating the union's position of disagreement and NATCA is ready to move forward. This issue is still being worked.

Gainsharing Article 88 Workgroup: The workgroup has completed its task and has presented their work to President John Carr and FAA Director of Air Traffic Bill Peacock for their approval.

Tax Consequences for Liaisons on extended details: A national memorandum of understanding is awaiting John Carr's review. The MOU places the tax burden on the agency when a liaison remains beyond one year. Carr presented MOU to Bill Peacock for signature.

Bargaining Unit Consolidation Petitions: Held in abeyance until Labor Relations determine the best course of action for NATCA, particularly while it is in negotiations with the various new units. Proposal were submitted to the

agency, are awaiting a reply. President Emeritus Barry Krasner and Labor Relations Director Bob Taylor are the leads.

Clarification of Units/Regional Counsel Office: Federal Aviation Administration has filed a petition for clarification of this unit excluding the administrative officers on the grounds they perform confidential work. General Counsel Susan Grundmann is the lead.

NATCA continues negotiations regarding aircraft certification, AMA, ABA, AGC, ARC and ARP, ABA, ARC, ARC-AL, AOS-200, 300/400, 510, AVN, ARP, AGC, BUE's. NATCA is scheduling to address the following units: Hawaii air traffic controllers and air guard techs, AIR, AFS-6-10. NATCA filed a petition with the authority for support staff specialist located in terminals, centers and regional offices.

Traffic Management Coordinators and Notice to Airmen collective bargaining agreement are combined, although the TMC CBA and pay are complete, NATCA cannot go to the printer until it wraps up pay for NOTAMs. Negotiations are on hold pending the Office of Management and Budget's decision of Association of Federal, State, and County Municipal Employees Unfair Labor Practice. Recently, OMB denied the pay provisions with AFSCME, the legal battle continues.

NATCA continues discussions with the agency regarding the union position that when an employee self refers, he/she cannot be required to abstain from alcohol nor be disciplined in any way, including last chance agreements. Labor Relations Representative Melinda Kim is the lead.

NATCA continues discussions to address the disparate treatment of regional flight surgeons regarding the withdrawal of bargaining unit employees medical for special consideration. Labor Relations Representative Melinda

continued on page 12

LR REPORT

continued from page 11

Kim is the lead.

National Alternate Dispute Resolution Article Nine is in place in all nine regions. Article Eight ADR is only in effect in the Central, Great Lakes and Western Pacific Regions. A determination will be made in August whether to

maintain Article Eight ADR in its current state or expand to other regions. In addition, NATCA will review the success of Article Nine ADR.

Official Time for Lobby Week: Official time for lobbying activities is controlled by Article Two. Official time to travel and delegation of facility representa-

tives is no longer an issue.

Mark Bagley joined the NATCA Labor Relations Department as a trainee for the summer. New Labor Relations Administrative Assistant Terri Wayne, joined May 21. A new organizer and representative for contract towers, Tom Bertelsman, will begin on June 25.

Union awards 20 scholarships to members' sons and daughters

NATCA is proud to announce the following scholarship winners for the 2001-2002 academic year:

- ◆ Julia Baker - daughter of Robert G. Baker, AGL
- ◆ Elias Clark - son of Robert Edward Clark, SCT
- ◆ Paul Hansen II - son of Paul Hansen, MCI
- ◆ Noelle James - daughter of Dale James, DAY
- ◆ Sarah Kindred - daughter of Gregory L. Kindred, SAV
- ◆ Nicole Lyens - daughter of Thomas and Sandy Lyens, RDU
- ◆ Dylan McMullen - son of Shawn McMullen, FAT
- ◆ Melody Morrison - daughter of Donald H. Morrison, PVD
- ◆ Jonathon Naiman - son of Michael Naiman, ZDV
- ◆ Erin Opperman - daughter of Ricky Opperman, SFO
- ◆ Stephanie Polete - daughter of Rick Polete, EVV
- ◆ Heather Schlegelmilch - daughter of Vincent

Schlegelmilch, ZNY

- ◆ Jenna Schulden - daughter of Anton F. Schulden, AVP
- ◆ Kevin Stanley - son of Kenneth W. Stanley, ORF
- ◆ Lindsay Stortz - daughter of Leslie Stortz, ZDV
- ◆ Kelsey Terhune - daughter of Rorie Terhune, DAY
- ◆ Tara Trainor - Joseph M. Trainor, ZJX
- ◆ Christopher Wixom - son of Lawrence A. Wixom, MSN
- ◆ Rebecca Wood - daughter of David C. Wood, ZDC
- ◆ John Wright - son of Barbara J. Wright, ILG

These students will receive a scholarship of \$1,000 and were chosen by lottery, as outlined in the Constitution. Fred Maass, son of Frederick Maass, LGA, received the President's Award, given for the essay that best captures the spirit of NATCA. It will be reprinted in the July/August issue of *The Air Traffic Controller*.

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Will Congress consider privatization a viable solution to air delays?

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