

AirTrafficController

Senate passes legislation prohibiting air traffic control privatization

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(left to right) Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., with NATCA President John Carr and Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin at a press conference earlier in the year. Lautenberg sponsored the amendment prohibiting the government from transferring air traffic control functions to private companies, which passed by a vote of 56-41.

In spite of a potential White House veto, the Senate weighed heavily in NATCA's favor by voting June 12 to prohibit the government from transferring air traffic control functions to private companies.

The amendment, sponsored by Sen. Frank Lautenberg, D-N.J., was part of legislation reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration, passed by a vote of 56-41. This included votes from 11 Senate Republicans and all but one Senate Democrat (three Senate Democrats were absent). To Lautenberg, the vote mirrors public sentiment on air traffic control privatization.

"Today the Senate spoke loud and clear: The nation's air traffic control system is not for sale," said Lautenberg following the vote. "One thing we learned from 9-11 is that the public does not want private contractors responsible for the safety

and security of air travelers. I was shocked when I learned that the Bush Administration wanted to contract out air traffic control to the lowest bidder."

"The passage of Lautenberg's amendment was an affirmative statement that the lawmakers in the Senate reject the shortsighted ideas of the ideologues that would put the interests of the American taxpayer aside to satisfy the personal interests of the few," NATCA Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin remarked.

NATCA members played an instrumental role in the political victory. Union activists flooded senators with phone calls and faxes explaining NATCA's stance on privatization and why the union believes outsourcing air traffic control is not in the country's best interest.

"The grassroots legislative activism demonstrated by our membership was truly astounding," remarked Randy Weiland, a

controller at the Greater Cincinnati Tower and National Legislative Committee chairman. "Their efforts rose to a level that ensured our voice was heard loud and clear on Capitol Hill."

A recent grassroots activism webpage (located at <http://www.unionvoice.org/natca/home.html>) allows NATCA members to join so they can be kept advised of the union's grassroots campaigns. Participants were asked to assist in those efforts by contacting key legislators and policy makers.

"The numbers for the grassroots web site went from an initial sign-up of 250 to approximately 1,800 during a 48 hour period, indicating a strong desire on the part of our members to assist the grassroots campaign," commented Weiland.

NATCA President John Carr joined Weiland in praising the efforts of NATCA members. "Never have I been prouder of our union's efforts. In the face of a threatened presidential veto. With the secretary of transportation lobbying against us. With the FAA administrator lobbying against us. With the airports and the airlines lobbying against us. With several influential senators speaking out against us. With all that, the members of this union answered the call and carried the day for our cause," he said.

Despite the victory, the battle over privatization is not over yet. The House and Senate must meet to reconcile the legislation and the President must sign the bill before it can become law.



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Presidential Perspective

The NATCA election season is upon us and only three of the 12 national offices on NATCA's National Executive Board are in contention. On July 31st the National Election Committee will tally up the ballots and the three regional vice presidential races will be decided.

On a personal note, I am honored and humbled to serve a second term as your national president. The last three years have flown by like a blur and the challenges we have all faced together seem, in retrospect, to have been almost insurmountable. And yet we have not only survived, we have prospered. What challenges, you ask?

The cowardly terrorist attacks in September 2001. Cockpit door reinforcements. The removal of our inherently governmental status and privatization language in the budget. The vital support provided for our nation's military as they flew combat air patrols from Brooklyn to Baghdad. The long road to new contracts for our many new bargaining units. The transition to a new administrator and our changing relationship with the agency.

Yet through it all we have consistently delivered the safest, most efficient air traffic control system. Our bargaining units are as diverse as our membership, and I'd like to tell you a bit about each of them.

Air Traffic Controllers: This nation's approximately 15,000 air traffic controllers ensure the safety of about two million aviation passengers per day - or almost one billion people per year. Controllers use their skills

and judgment to safely direct more than 60 million aircraft annually to their destinations.

Engineers and Architects: NATCA represents 1,200 engineers and architects who design new facilities, construct or remodel ATC facilities and replace aging NAS equipment. They evaluate systems and provide technical support to fix problems with NAS equipment. In addition, they analyze radar and communications coverage, correct deficiencies in existing systems, propose changes and upgrades and present those changes to the agency to secure funding and support.

Aerospace Medicine: NATCA represents 30 members in Regional FAA offices, en route centers and the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center in Oklahoma City. Nurses and their assistants who work closely with doctors and report indirectly to the Office of Aviation Medicine comprise this group. They help administer physicals for FAA employees, including controllers

Aircraft Certification Service: NATCA represents 532 members in regional offices nationwide. This group is comprised of aerospace engineers, senior engineers, flight test pilots, administrative officers, aircraft certification assistants and technical support personnel.

Airports Division: NATCA represents 263 members in all regions except the FAA's Eastern Region office. These employees are responsible for the distribution of airport improvement funds, coordination of airport design, oversight of land purchases and annual safety inspections.

Automation Support Specialists (ATB 200 and AOS 300): NATCA represents 175 members in en route centers and field facilities nationwide who are computer specialists, computer scientists, electronic engineers and air traffic control specialists. Their primary function is to provide operational computer software support and maintenance for en route centers and terminal environments.

Engineers (AOS): NATCA represents 124 members in Oklahoma City for AVN (Aviation System Standards), AOS (Operational Support)-200, 510 and AFS (Flight Standards)-610; Atlantic City for AOS-260/270. This is the National Airways Systems Engineering Division, which provides field support, maintains the configuration management of systems and performs modifications of equipment.

Financial Services (ABA-HQ): NATCA represents 101 members who are budget and policy analysts, financial management accountants and travel and payroll financial accountants overseeing all aspects of the FAA budget for all lines of business.

Inspectors of the Compliance and Enforcement Branch of the Drug Abatement Division: NATCA represents 40 members in seven regional FAA offices, Miami, the Mike Monroney Aeronautical Center and in headquarters who report directly to the Office of Aerospace Medicine.

Notice to Airmen (NOTAM): NATCA represents 10 employees at the FAA's Command Center who are responsible for opera-

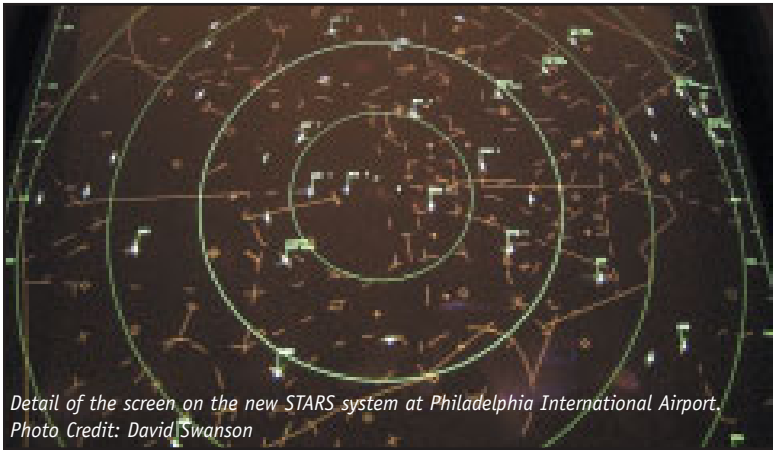
tion compliance with policies and procedures, and communicate this data to pilots on any issue that impacts safety of flight.

Regional Counsel's Office: NATCA represents 65 employees in eight different regions in the FAA Legal Division who are attorneys, para-professionals and other administrative staff.

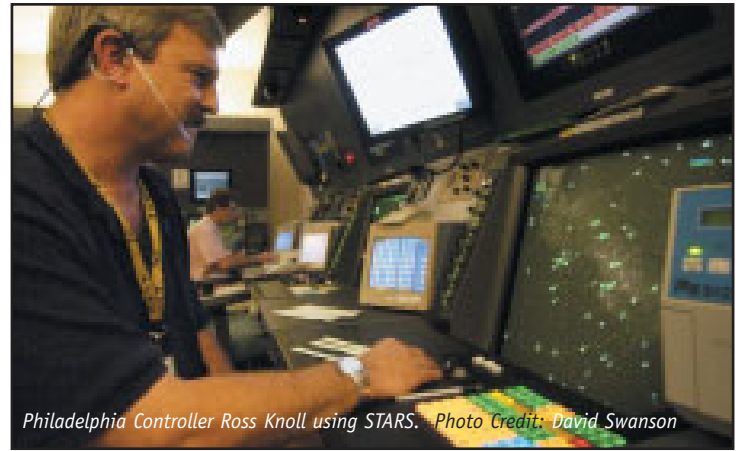
Regional Logistics, Finance and Information Management Services Division: NATCA represents 518 members in regional offices nationwide, except in the Eastern Region. These are regional real estate, acquisition, materiel/material, property, regional building services, accounting, payroll, finance, budget and computer specialists. They are involved in materiel/material purchasing and inventory control, asset management and accountability, land and associated fixtures purchasing, budget planning, payroll for all employees, accounts receivable and payable, programming and computer support.

Staff Support Specialists: NATCA now represents 939 staff specialists who are air traffic controllers located in regional offices, air route traffic control centers, TRACONS and towers. They support the daily operation of the air traffic system. One primary responsibility is to initiate procedural and traffic management changes to enhance the controller's ability to move aircraft through the system.

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Detail of the screen on the new STARS system at Philadelphia International Airport. Photo Credit: David Swanson



Philadelphia Controller Ross Knoll using STARS. Photo Credit: David Swanson

With great fanfare, the Federal Aviation Administration commissioned the Standard Terminal Automation Replacement System in Philadelphia on June 9.

But while controllers rightly claimed their ample share of the credit for the success of the system, the dimming prospects for timely installation of STARS and other projects, such as Contoller Pilot Data Link Communications, led President John Carr to declare that the FAA's modernization deployment waterfall has "turned into a trickle."

Philadelphia controllers are pleased with the performance of STARS, which was turned on in November and has experienced only a few minor glitches. And NATCA was quick to make sure the public knew that not only have controllers stood at the forefront of the drive for new technology, it was controller involvement from the very beginning that was the major reason for STARS emerging as a success story.

"In Philadelphia, they pushed very hard to be the first to receive STARS and worked hard to make it a success," Carr remarked.

"The success of STARS in Philadelphia was an amazing team effort," Steve Kelley, NATCA STARS Tower Representative stat-

ed. "Everyone, from NATCA to Professional Airways Systems Specialists to the FAA to the vendor (Raytheon) had a hand in it. It was wonderful to see everyone working towards a unified goal."

That said, Kelley added, alluding to the fact that NATCA was invited to the commissioning only by Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., and not FAA, "It's just too bad, however, that the current FAA administrator fails to see the overall value of 'team' efforts and of working together."

For a program that is hundreds of millions of dollars over budget, several years late in arriving and a frequent target of criticism from Congress, the good news out of Philadelphia provided the program with its most flattering press coverage to date. The articles conveyed an emphasis on its reliability and effectiveness as a cornerstone of the air traffic control modernization effort, rather than portraying STARS as an easy target for critics of government waste.

"It's like comparing an eight-track tape player to a CD player," Philadelphia Controller and NATCA Member Tom Bayalis said of STARS to an Associated Press reporter at the commissioning event, a quote

that ran in newspapers nationwide.

But the FAA will deploy only seven new STARS systems this year, not 18 as originally scheduled, a fact that led both Carr and Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin to question the FAA's commitment to modernization.

"Controllers love new technology. In the case of STARS, they want it and are waiting for it at many locations. You really have to question the wisdom of the FAA for allowing its moderniza-

tion effort to fall to a lower priority at precisely the time we should be going full steam ahead,"

said Marlin, who was with Philadelphia controllers during the commissioning events.

Kelley reflected on the negative impact felt by controllers.

"Equipment continues to fail or reach capacity all over the nation at an alarming rate," he commented.

"STARS is a new and usable technology that can only help us continue to provide the American public with the safest skies in the world. So, delaying deployment doesn't just demoralize us, it hurts!"

Kelley characterized the

deployment schedule as "a never-ending saga, thanks to the agency's inconsistency. It changes the waterfall far too frequently, sometimes for the right reasons, but more often than not simply from outside pressure."

As it stands now, he added, Philadelphia has joined El Paso, Texas, Portland, Ore., and Hartford, Conn., as sites where the full service version of STARS equipment is located. The current waterfall will see the following Early Display Configuration sites upgraded to full service over the next year: Memphis, Tenn., Birmingham, Ala., Albany, N.Y., Detroit, Albuquerque, N.M., Providence, R.I., Las Vegas, Omaha, Neb., and Des Moines.

Additional sites which will eventually go directly to full service level are Miami, Cleveland, Boston, Milwaukee, Columbus, Ohio, San Antonio and Seattle.

Syracuse, N.Y., is operating on a different version of full service level and will transition to the national baseline level - used by the aforementioned sites - this fall.

"The FAA's modernization deployment waterfall has turned into a trickle."

Former White House press secretary aids efforts to fight privatization



Joe Lockhart is best known for his time in the nation's spotlight as White House press secretary for much of former President Clinton's second term. But for the past year, Lockhart, along with colleagues from the Washington, D.C., firm he co-founded, The Glover Park Group (GPG), have assisted NATCA's fight to prevent the privatization of air traffic control.

GPG was hired to add value to NATCA's ability

to think strategically, act tactically and focus its communications, media and public relations strategy.

Before joining the White House in 1997, Lockhart was national press secretary for the Clinton/Gore 1996 re-election campaign. His political experience spans several U.S. presidential campaigns. He served as deputy press secretary for the Dukakis/Bentsen 1988 campaign, assistant press secretary for the Mondale/Ferraro 1984 campaign and regional press coordinator for the Carter/Mondale 1980 campaign.

Lockhart's journalism career included key positions at CNN, ABC and SKY Television News of London.

Lockhart talked with the *Air Traffic Controller* about NATCA's standing on Capitol Hill, Washington politics and privatization.

How do you see NATCA perceived as an organization in Washington, D.C., and on Capitol Hill?

"In a town where the norm is declining union influence, I believe NATCA bucks the trend. NATCA is perceived as a professionally run organization that can deal with both Democrats and Republicans. Democrats perceive NATCA as one of the stronger and more effective union organizations and a reliable partner on all issues. Republicans see NATCA as a fierce proponent for their workers, but also as a group they can do business with."

Now that Washington is an all-Republican controlled town, why should the NATCA PAC continue to support Democrats?

"The core support and defense of workers rights and principles will always come from the Democratic party. The Democratic party has been and will remain a reliable partner for the labor movement. On some issues, we need Republican support to get things done. But, more importantly, we need Democrats to keep the conservative movement from doing what they would like to do to unions and workers in America."

What is the value of keeping our relationships going with Democrats?

"You really can't get anything done in Washington unless you have committed friends. Democrats are those friends and we should never lose sight of that."

How does the media view controllers and also their fight against privatization?

"The media has not paid much attention to privatization of air traffic controllers because they don't think it's very likely. Once this becomes more real to them, we'll see a shift. I believe the mainstream media will be quite hostile to privatization based on important safety issues. On the other hand, the mainstream media keeps shrinking and the conservative media keeps growing. Lucky for us, Rush Limbaugh is on our side."

Were you surprised to see Sen. Frank Lautenberg's anti-privatization amendment pass by a vote of 56-41 - 59-41 if you count the three Democrats who missed the vote but would have approved the amendment?

"I was surprised that so many Republicans came along. That's an indication that common sense still resides in the Senate. It's also a message to the Administration that despite real ideological support for privatization, many Republicans will draw the line at air traffic control. That is a really important point as we move forward in this fight."

How do you see the 2004 presidential election playing out?

"Contrary to conventional wisdom, 2004 is going to be a very interesting and competitive year. President Bush is quite vulnerable because very little has gone right as far as his domestic agenda. Democrats will spill blood but will eventually nominate an attractive and electable nominee. The interesting political science question is will the Bush money machine overwhelm the system? Look for a tight presidential race and Democratic pickups in the House and Senate."

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Traffic Management Coordinators (TMCS): NATCA represents 606 employees in en route centers and terminals, including 88 within ATCSCC in Herndon, Va., provide traffic management services to users and facilities throughout the NAS.

You see, while it is gratifying to serve as a part of your elected leadership, it is the membership that makes us strong. Our team of aviation professionals is the best in the world and the world knows it. While events have not always led us where we intended to go we have always ended up where we intended to be.

Chicago controllers find a dose of reality on CBS' 'The Amazing Race'

When Chicago Center Controllers Steve Meitz and Dave Cottingham landed their dream adventure earlier this year on the CBS reality television series, "The Amazing Race," the experience was part scavenger hunt and part endurance test. But the rewards were an 18-year friendship growing stronger and the realization of how much their loved ones meant after more than a month apart with no contact whatsoever.

The show pitted 12 pairs of teams in a race around the world that involved finding clues and meeting physical and mental challenges. The winning team after 12 episodes earned \$1 million. Meitz and Cottingham advanced to the final eight teams before their elimination on the fifth show, but said the experience was wonderful.

Self-described reality television fans, Meitz and Cottingham were selected for the show based on a three-minute video they made of themselves which sought to capture their personalities. Interestingly, it wasn't the video they shot after three hours of agonizing work which was sent to CBS - it was the blooper reel.

"We kept screwing up when we tried to make the video and we did a lot of swearing at each other and laughing at each other. It was just our real personalities," Cottingham said. "I think that really helped us stand out. But the job was a hook. They said they never had controllers on before." And, Cottingham added, "After our performance, they may not want a controller again!"

The show required a commitment of several weeks away from family and job, which forced Meitz and Cottingham to do some creative scheduling at Chicago Center. However, as luck would have it, the first day they were needed for the show - Jan. 12 - was the first day of the new leave year at the facility. That, combined with some time saved up and time off awards allowed the pair to escape until the third week in February. Nobody was to know where they were.

"The weird thing was we had to tell a few people and they all signed confidentiality waivers," Cottingham remarked. "The rumor was out there but nobody knew."

When their co-workers finally learned the truth about their time away, "98 percent of them were supportive," Meitz said.

The race began in Los Angeles and the first challenge was to make one of three flights to Italy departing from Los Angeles International Airport. Meitz and Cottingham, like several other teams, got lost on the freeway, but used information only a controller would know to rebound when they spotted a plane flying low above them.

"I knew which runways they had at LAX," Cottingham stated. "We were lost and didn't know where the airport was. But I knew when I saw that plane that it was on short final. So we made a right turn and we were there."

The team's five-episode adventure took them to the Italian Alps,

Venice, Austria, France and Amsterdam before their elimination. Along the way were challenges that included rope climbing across high-altitude rocky mountain peaks, a 460-foot bungee jump off the Donaturm in Austria, the tallest tower-jump in Europe, and rappelling down the face of a cliff.

It was in the Alps where Cottingham suffered a knee injury hiking over a snow-covered mountain pass that nearly sidelined the team in the very first episode. But it was then that Meitz realized what his friend was all about.

"Dave has incredible fortitude," Meitz remarked. "I thought he was out. They sent search and rescue with a snowmobile. His knee did not bend. But he said he would not let his partner down and he hiked a mile up

the mountain. That was just amazing."

Cottingham's knee never quite recovered. But the pair worked and laughed their way through several more challenges, until a fateful decision in The Netherlands: Drive 30 miles to an outdoor market, don traditional Dutch wooden clogs and carry 500 kilograms of cheese to a scale, or drive 12 miles to a ranch and search for their next clue in a 15-foot pile of cow manure.

Most teams chose the manure. Cottingham and Meitz took the cheese. "I wouldn't stick my hand in 15-feet of cow crap for a million bucks!" Meitz joked. As a result, they ended up arriving last at a checkpoint. After the pair were eliminated, their comments, aired at the end of the show, were filled with emotion and reflection.

"One thing I'm going to take out of 'The Amazing Race' is just how much I love my wife," Cottingham said. "I guess you just don't realize how good you have it until you don't have it for awhile." Meitz added, "We're still going to be friends, best of friends. 'The Amazing Race' was a chance of a lifetime."

Chicago Center Controllers Steve Meitz and Dave Cottingham competed for a \$1 million on the "The Amazing Race."
Photo Credit: Tony Esparza/CBS ©CBS Worldwide Inc.



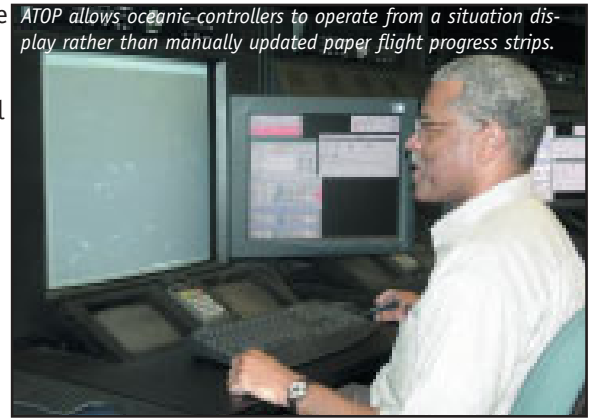
New advances in oceanic technology should increase capacity and efficiency

Air traffic controllers frequently face complicated situations, but for those who separate aircraft over oceans, creating a mental picture of air traffic is a particularly intricate and essential task. Oceanic air traffic control is a significant departure from conventional radar and frequently forces controllers to go back to the basics because the vastness of oceans precludes them from having direct voice communications with flights.

"When you get right down to it, we're working airplanes the way it has been done in the non-radar, enroute environment since the dawn of air traffic control," said Ian Fullmer, an area representative at Oakland Center, a facility that handles a considerable amount of oceanic traffic.

"We rely on position reports and flight plans to build a mental 'picture' of where aircraft are relative to one another," explained Fullmer. "The separation minima we use (a longitudinal distance of 10 minutes or about 80 miles) are huge by domestic radar standards."

Controllers who are working oceanic traffic must utilize different communications equipment than those separating airplanes over land. "When controllers handle oceanic traffic, the use of standard VHF (Very High Frequency) radios is impractical because of an aircraft's distance from land," Fullmer explained. "Instead, transmissions are either relayed through HF (High Frequency) radio operators at ARINC (Aeronautical Radio Incorporated) or sent directly to the flight crew as data link messages."



ATOP allows oceanic controllers to operate from a situation display rather than manually updated paper flight progress strips.

New Oceanic Technology

Oceanic air traffic control will always remain a complicated science, but the advent of groundbreaking technology to increase capacity and efficiency will soon allow controllers to direct their energies toward enhancing services for aircraft.

"The new oceanic technology represents such a drastic change from the way oceanic air traffic control has been done in the past that it is almost impossible to overstate the significance of it," commented NATCA Oceanic Liaison Vincent Gerry.

Currently, oceanic air traffic control is accomplished by using computer-printed paper strips that analyze aircraft flight plans and print out coordinates for every 10 degrees of longitude. Controllers sit in front of a large board displaying the strips, jotting down positions, times and aircraft requests.

Aircraft services and requests such as a desire for a higher altitude sometimes have to wait because of the extremely time-consuming and complex nature of oceanic air traffic control in its current state," Gerry explained. "With the new system, paper strips are replaced by electronic ones that handle strip marking and maintenance for the controller, freeing up his or her valuable time on the job. This ensures that premium service to aircraft can be offered without sacrificing the stringent safety standards NATCA members work to protect."

Satellite Technology

Satellite technology is another component of the system that is rewarding to both controllers and aircraft.

"ADS-A (Automatic Dependent Surveillance, Addressable) provides satellite position reporting from aircraft to satellites and then to our system. Because we no longer have to use HF Radio, there is no middleman and the amount of separation needed over oceans can be reduced without compromising safety. This will serve to increase aircraft services and capacity," Gerry explained.

Communication

Communication is a key component to the way oceanic air traffic control will be handled in the near future.

An increasing percentage of aircraft that controllers work with are Controller-Pilot Data Link Communications (CPDLC) equipped, which makes communicating with pilots an easier task.

"Think of CPDLC as instant messaging capability between controller and pilot," Fullmer commented. "CPDLC is great because it is much faster than HF relay and cuts out the middle man and any associated ambiguity."

With increased capabilities, however, comes a price. Airlines and other businesses that frequent the oceanic skies will need to foot the bill for some upgraded technology. But is it worth it?

"Absolutely 100 percent worth their while," answered Gerry. "Not only will this system increase safety and efficiency but it also will cut delays and increase capacity by reducing separation standards, allowing airlines to fly along optimum routes and altitudes, thus increasing revenue."

Ocean-21

Ocean-21, a system designed by Lockheed Martin, is seen as a remarkable advance in oceanic technology. ATOP (Advanced Technologies and Oceanic Procedures) is the name of the program designed to replace the current system, and includes many comprehensive safety features that alert controllers to problems before hazardous situations can develop.

"The system notifies controllers of any mistakes, such as an aircraft reporting an incorrect altitude or running behind schedule," Gerry said. "One of the many tools built into the system is called 'Conflict Probe,' a decision support tool used by controllers to detect conflicts and assist in their resolution. It notifies controllers of any irregularities and assists them in working through the complexities of crossing traffic situations and route requests that are currently time-consuming manual tasks."

Dallas Forth Worth controllers utilize two towers, with a third in reserve

Many air traffic controllers work in towers, but at Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport, NATCA members have the unique distinction of performing air traffic control functions from two towers with a third standing in reserve.

Dallas/Fort Worth Tower (DFW) is the only facility in the United States to have three control towers available to manage the heavy traffic that uses the airport everyday, but this unique concept has not come without criticism from some of the controllers who call the facility home.

"I think this 'three-tower concept' came as a result of poor planning," remarked NATCA DFW Facility Representative Mark Mulder. "There are problems with coordination between towers that are a natural byproduct of working planes in the same airspace on a regular basis with someone that is two miles away from where you're sitting."

The three towers at DFW include a center tower, and two outboard towers (east and west). The outboard towers were originally designed as satellite towers to handle traffic on the outer runways, while the center tower managed the bulk of the facility's traffic. After

construction began on a new terminal, controllers moved into the outer towers to avoid an obstructed view. This change became permanent when it was realized that the view from the center tower would always be partially blocked unless a new one was built. The central tower is now used only when there are



times planes end up talking with the wrong tower, which requires them to identify themselves twice and forces extra work on very busy controllers. Credit must go to NATCA members at DFW for their unceasing commitment to safety and professionalism in the face of these obstacles."

DFW Controller Judy Bruce

***"We have done what controllers do best. Despite our facility's challenges, we have come together to make it work,"
- Judy Bruce, Dallas Fort Worth Controller***

equipment problems in the outer towers. Controllers rotate which tower they work in on a regular basis, and each tower handles their side of the airport only for arrivals and departures. Many times, however, the distance between controllers can cause air traffic control problems.

"If an airplane is planning to land on the east side of the airport they need to be talking to the tower that handles those takeoffs and landings," Mulder explained. "But some-

times planes end up talking with the wrong tower, which requires them to identify themselves twice and forces extra work on very busy controllers. Credit must go to NATCA members at DFW for their unceasing commitment to safety and professionalism in the face of these obstacles."

DFW Controller Judy Bruce agrees that the high skill level possessed by NATCA members at the facility accounts for the tower's impeccable safety record despite its obstacles.

"We have done what controllers do best," she said. "Despite our facility's challenges, we have come together to make it work."

Proximity is one of the key issues that Bruce cites as making DFW a unique and challenging place to work.

or we have the same route off both sides of the airport at the same time," she commented. "It is always easier to communicate with someone standing 10 feet from you as compared to communicating over a landline so that calls are not missed and efficiency is ensured."

DFW Controller Keith Alexander echoed many of Bruce's sentiments.

"As controllers at DFW, we are diligent in our efforts to safely and effectively communicate with the opposite tower," he said. "We have taxi routes that the aircraft utilize so controllers know if they are going the wrong way, but sometimes you just don't know who they are because you are always in the opposite tower when aircraft cross the bridges from one side to another."

Mulder has his own unique solution to the facility's problems.

"I would ultimately like to see our facility converted into a one-tower operation," he said. "With massive retirements expected here in the next five years, we can eliminate duplicated positions and run a more efficient operation by making it easier for controllers to communicate and do what they do best."

Carr served as guest speaker at event recognizing federal agencies

NATCA President John Carr kept up his busy schedule this month by serving as guest speaker at "The Cleveland Federal Executive Board Wings of Excellence Awards Presentation," a major event that recognizes almost 40 federal agencies in Cleveland for hard work and dedication to their cause.

The event attracted over 500 people, including a virtual "who's who" list of those working in Cleveland's federal agencies. These include the Environmental Protection Agency, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Internal Revenue Service and many more. Carr's remarks were aimed at extolling the virtues of civil service in a time where such work has been a target of criticism.

"It's pretty interesting to note just what federal employees do in this country when you stop and think about it, and I wanted to

leave the attendees with pride and a sense of community for having served their country as government workers," Carr explained after the speech. When Carr broached the issue of "running government like a business," the outspoken NATCA president did not mince words.

"Every now and again, you will hear someone say they wish the federal government ran more like a business, and I often wonder what they mean by that statement," he said. "Surely they don't want us to emulate the way Wall Street has vaporized over seven trillion dollars worth of equity in the last three years...Perhaps business should work more like government...You see, politicians come and go, markets rise and fall, tastes change and fads wear thin but civil servants keep America running."

Marlin addresses privatization in speech to Bahamian air traffic controllers

NATCA Executive Vice President Ruth Marlin works to protect the interests of air traffic controllers in the United States on a continual basis.

She recently took the union's message on the road, contributing her expertise at the Bahamas Air Traffic Controllers Union (BATCU) Conference, a gathering of Bahamian air traffic controllers and government officials widely regarded as one of the most significant aviation events in the country's history.

Marlin addressed the threat presented by air traffic control privatization, an issue of particular importance to Bahamian controllers. The audience included cabinet masters of transportation, finance, public service and tourism.

"The Canadian provider (the business branch of NAV Canada)

has been doing work in the Caribbean to augment its business model, a situation that would create a hole in U.S. controlled airspace," Marlin said. "I emphasized that when it comes to privatization of air traffic control services, many promises are made regarding infrastructure and staffing, but few are kept."

In addition, Marlin pointed out the tendencies of private providers to increase fees when traffic goes down and to seek government aid when times get tough.

As an alternative to privatization, the Bahamian government could choose to take over

air traffic control functions for itself (it is currently managed by the FAA).

"The Bahamian controllers want to build their aviation infrastructure from the bottom up and take over air traffic control for themselves rather than turn it over to a foreign company," Marlin commented.

"For them, growing aviation infrastructure is a matter of national sovereignty, and one of their main goals is to build their own capacity."

Marlin's speech marked the first time NATCA has participated in the BATCU Conference.

"I really enjoyed interacting with Bahamian controllers throughout the trip," Marlin

remarked. "Their situation is similar to that of U.S. controllers in the past, and the decisions they make today will serve to define their country's aviation infrastructure for the future."

Marlin also spoke about the PATCO strike and its impact in the United States. "Bahamian controllers are in the process of recovering from a lockout, and were interested in how long it took to rebuild the U.S. system," Marlin explained.

"Many of the FAA's difficulties in modernizing during the late 80s and early 90s can be attributed to the staffing shortage."

For additional information about air traffic control privatization, please logon to <http://www.natca.org/legislationcenter/privatization.msp>.

"When it comes to privatization of air traffic control services, many promises are made regarding infrastructure and staffing, but few are kept."

NATCA Drug Abatement Division members preserve fairness in the process

When it comes to protecting the rights of airline employees, NATCA members in the Drug Abatement Division are in a class by themselves. These Federal Aviation Administration employees ensure that air carriers in the United States are in strict compliance with drug and alcohol testing regulations set by the FAA and the Department of Transportation, and that no one's rights are trampled in the process.

Airlines routinely test safety-sensitive employees such as flight attendants and pilots for drug and alcohol use, but strict rules are in place to ensure that workers are treated equitably. Ben Fish, Inspector and Drug Abatement unit national representative, made it clear that his unit preserves fairness in the process rather than conducting the tests themselves.

"We don't hold the bottle, fortunately," he remarked. "We audit the testing programs of the airlines to make sure they are done according to regulations and that no one's rights are compromised."

Fish and his team ensure that drug testers contracted by the airlines follow strict FAA protocol and meet procedural standards. "We spend time inspecting the qualifications and conduct of contracted testers, as well as audit collectors and laboratories," explained Fish.

"For example, regulations require that testers use a random selection process so that every employee eligible for testing has an equal chance of being selected and that no one in particular can be singled out."

An additional requirement is that employees who are selected for a random drug test must be given visual and aural privacy so that the proceeding is not open to public view. If an employee tests positive for alcohol and drug use, the Drug Abatement unit ensures that FAA protocols are followed before he or she can resume their duties.

"When someone fails a test, we make sure they participate in a rehabilitation program prior to returning to duty," Fish said. "They also must pass a 'return-to-duty test' before being allowed to come back, and are subjected to follow-up testing."

Employees who test positive for drug or alcohol use have their tests automatically reviewed by a medical review officer with the authority to downgrade positive test results if they are in error or he/she believes the employee has a legitimate explanation (such as a valid prescription from a physician).

Within NATCA, the Drug Abatement Division is combined with the engineers and architects to create what is essentially one "region" of about 2,508 bargaining unit members who are represented by Engineers and Architects Vice President Jim D'Agati on the National Executive Board.

For more information about this NATCA bargaining unit, please logon to <http://www.natca.org/about/members.msp>.

New air traffic control towers provide controllers with clearer view

As summer begins, many NATCA members will experience a clearer view of their facility's traffic thanks to the construction of new air traffic control towers at some of the nation's busiest airports.

Work has begun on a new 340-foot tower at Indianapolis International Airport to replace the current 140-foot structure. The airport's controllers, who currently work about 280 flights daily, will soon be able to handle a greater traffic volume while maintaining a strong focus on safety.

"The airport has expanded significantly to the west in the last 30 years, resulting in our tower being relegated to the east end instead of the central location it occupied before recent development efforts," NATCA Facility Representative Kevin Brown explained. "The real impetus for the project came as a result of planning for the new Midfield Terminal, a \$1 billion project tall enough to obstruct the view of controllers in the current tower, making seeing runways impossible."

Brown is excited about improved working conditions for NATCA members at the facility.

"The much taller structure will give controllers greatly improved visibility of the entire airport," he said. "In addition, the new structure comes with all the bells and whistles, including the newest communications and radar equipment."

Controllers will also be greeted by more spacious surroundings, an improvement that will further advance efficiency and safety standards.

"In total, we are going from having 8,000 sq. ft. to 24,000 sq. ft., including a basement and two floors above ground," Brown commented. "The tower cab size will more than double and the size of the TRACON will

nearly quadruple."

Construction has also commenced on a new air traffic control tower at Phoenix Sky Harbor International Airport. The 335-foot tower will be about double the size of its predecessor, and will alleviate visibility problems for controllers at the facility. NATCA members had complained that the rapid expansion of terminals and gates made it difficult to see airplanes moving between terminals and the runway.

"The problem with the current tower is that it just wasn't built for what it's being used for now," explained Tony Aquino, NATCA Representative for the Phoenix Tower Project. "We're currently the fifth busiest airport in the country with American West and Southwest Airlines really kicking up traffic, and 181 feet just won't cut it anymore."

The tower, which is expected to be complete by the mid-2005, has additional features that augment its height.

"The new, more spacious cabin design gives controllers more room to work with the updated equipment," Aquino remarked. "In addition, windows are now away from the consoles and the tower's height gives the controllers a 100 percent unobstructed view."

Aquino and the many others involved in the process incorporated the airport's future plans for expansion into their design to make certain that the tower would be able to adapt to changing conditions for years to come.

"We used a simulator to make certain that future designs don't conflict with the tower we are trying to build," he said. "The entire process is very proactive. We don't want to be shortsighted and unpre-



Grand Canyon Air Traffic Control Tower provides enhanced visibility for controllers. It also is equipped with top-notch equipment. Photo Credit: Michael J. Ebersole

pared for future contingencies."

A new air traffic control tower recently erected at New Jersey's Newark International Airport is now up and running. The structure, which opened for operations in the first week of May, comes as a welcome relief to busy controllers at the extremely hectic facility.

"We have progressed from a tower that was 40-years-old, outdated and cramped to a facility that is truly state of the art and pleasant to work in," remarked Newark Vice President Dan D'Agostino.

D'Agostino echoed the opinions of other facility representatives in noting that Newark's former tower was simply a victim of passing time.

"As a facility, we outgrew it," he explained. "It was simply too old, and was inadequate for the traffic we run at Newark, a city that has gone from being a sleepy hollow of New York to a major aviation center."

The new structure has addressed visibility concerns expressed by controllers, and has given NATCA members who work in the tower access to the latest technology available.

"The new tower is over twice as tall as its predecessor, virtually eliminating visibility problems at the airport," D'Agostino said. "Our enhanced equipment includes ETVS (Enhanced Terminal

Voice Switch), which allows controllers more flexibility in moving to other radio frequencies from any place in the tower so that we can better serve incoming and outgoing aircraft."

At Grand Canyon Tower in Arizona, controllers are impressed with their new work environment, calling it a vast improvement that will help them better serve pilots and the general public.

"This new tower represents a huge advancement for the NATCA members here," Grand Canyon Facility Representative Gary Mathis said. "It is comfortable, more ergonomic and provides greatly enhanced visibility for controllers."

The new tower is in a more centralized location than that of the previous one, and benefits from a structure that is nearly twice as tall and unobstructed by trees and other obstacles. In addition, the new structure comes equipped with top-notch air traffic control technology.

"The facility now has ETVS as well as wind measuring equipment that uses radio waves to furnish accurate assessments of wind direction and speed onto plasma screens."

Many online technologies available to NATCA members and their families

In a move sure to please NATCA members, the National Communications Committee and the National Communications Department have joined forces to offer a wide array of online technologies to union members and their families in an effort to keep them informed and provide a valuable communications resource.

Websites

NATCA offers three informative websites to meet the needs of members.

www.NATCA.org

The first, available at <http://www.NATCA.org>, represents NATCA's global presence on the Internet and contains an extensive member-oriented section. The members only area contains additional resources available only to those who are part of the union including access to arbitration databases, updates from the union's leadership and pertinent legislative information.

How do you receive access to the members only section of NATCA's website?

1. Members can visit <http://www.natca.org/natca/signup.asp> to request access to the members-only section of the website.

2. Enter their last name and membership identification number.

3. Those who are unsure of their ID number should contact the Membership and Marketing Department at the national office at 800/266-0895.

4. Retired members with no ID number should e-mail webdesign@natca.net.

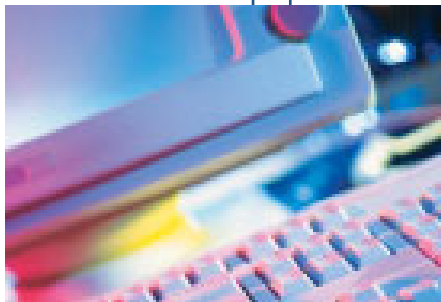
www.NATCAShop.org

Members can also purchase NATCA merchandise at <http://www.NATCAShop.org>, an online store that offers union apparel and accessories.

www.NATCAvoice.org

In addition, "The NATCA Voice" is a newsletter specifically tailored to members. The website for the publication, available at <http://www.NATCAvoice.org>, is maintained by Voice staff and includes back issues of the newsletter.

Features such as "The Swap Meet," "Members In Need" and the "NATCA Voice Shop" have been moved to the NATCA national website so that union resources can be centralized in one location.



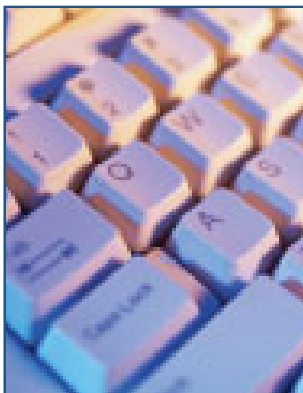
Website Hosting

NATCA also offers each region, local, committee and coalition web space to host its own website. The union does not offer space for commercial websites.

Currently, NATCA does not have a policy which limits the amount of space for each website but we request each web author exercises restraint regarding the storage requirements for their site so a national policy will not become necessary. Private, password protected sub-webs (called child webs) are available.

How do you request space for hosting a website?

1. Login to the members only section of NATCA's website.
2. Go to <http://www.natca.org/members/request-site.asp>.
3. Please submit the form and someone will contact you with additional details.



E-mail Accounts

E-mail accounts are also available for members. Separate e-mail addresses are available for NATCA members in good standing and members of their immediate families, NATCA facilities and other NATCA bargaining units, as well as international air traffic controllers.

How do you request a NATCA e-mail account?

1. Login to the members only section of NATCA's website.
2. Go to <http://www.natca.org/members/requestemail.asp>.
3. Please submit the form for each email account you want. Your membership will be verified and your email account information will be emailed to you.

Please be advised that NATCA does not provide dial-up access. You must have an existing Internet Service Provider (ISP) account (either dial-up or broadband) which provides you basic internet access.

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Updates

On or about June 19 the New Hampshire Commission for Human Rights dismissed two discrimination claims filed by employees against NATCA. The investigating commissioner made a finding of "No Probable Cause" in both cases.

On or about May 15, the Federal Labor Relations Authority, San Francisco Region, dismissed NATCA information request unfair labor practice charge. The charge concerned the union's right to all information and documents relied on by the agency in the discipline of an employee. On June 16, NATCA appealed the decision of the regional director to the FLRA's general counsel.

On or about May 24, NATCA received the decision of Arbitrator Long in an Eastern Region grievance denying the grievance in part and awarding the grievant a make whole remedy for the period of his decertification from a CIC position. On or about June 25, the agency filed exceptions to this award and petition for review of the decision with the Federal Labor Relations Authority. NATCA plans to oppose the agency's exceptions.

Bargaining Unit Status

NATCA's bargaining units, including ABA, AOS, ATB, AAM, ARP, ARC, AGC, AIR, NOTAM and NUDAI are at impasse over pay negotiations. The parties have been released from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service (FMCS). NATCA has requested the services of the Federal Services Impasse Panel.

Arbitration Decision

On May 20, NATCA received a favorable arbitration decision from Jay Grenig concerning the removal of Thomas Burks for allegedly being hired over the maximum age of 31 upon original appointment with the FAA.

Prior to the removal action, Burks was an FAA air traffic controller for approximately five years, most recently at the Flint

Tower. Burks began his career as a controller in the military then with the Department of Defense as a civilian controller. The DOD granted an age waiver in order for him to obtain employment since he was over the age of 31 when hired. Upon being hired by the FAA, the age waiver was fully considered and accepted as reflected by the regional administrator's response to congressional inquiries and direct communications from HR at the FAA headquarters.

The arbitrator agreed that the removal was contrary to the "efficiency of service" standard established in Article 10, section 3 and that it was not in the interest of the public or the FAA to remove such of an experienced controller five years after being hired and after receiving full certified controller status.

The Office of Personnel Management has petitioned for reconsideration from the arbitrator and may appeal to federal court following the decision. NATCA is continuing in the fight to uphold the arbitrator's decision and protect Burks' employment as a controller. NATCA is planning to file a brief in response to OPM's brief with the arbitrator.

Upcoming Arbitrations

1. LR-2001-0010-NAT, Article 93 (self-referral) - July 1 - Settlement discussions
2. AL-2003-0000-EAL, Removal - July 10
3. GL-99-0372-ORD, Medical Disqualification - July 22
4. LR-2003-0006-NAT, Excused Absence/Holiday Pay - July 23
5. WP-2003-0000-ZOA, Removal - Aug. 7
6. SW-2000-0137-I90, Reclassification/Pay Grade - Aug. 13
7. SW-2000-0245-OKC, SW-2000-0238-OKC, SW-2000-0239-OKC, Nepotism - Aug. 19
8. LR-2002-0003-NAT, Overtime Bypass - Sept. 18 and 19
9. NM-03-0000-GTF, Removal - Sept. 17
10. LR-2003-0003-NAT, Overtime and Sunday Premium Pay - Sept. 26

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WebBoards

Members WebBoard

Members can communicate with each other as well as members of the public using NATCA WebBoards (BBSs). The NATCA WebBoard, located at <http://bbs.natca.net>, is an online communications forum for NATCA members. Information on the board ranges from discussion of general issues to specialty topics on a variety of subject matter pertaining to the union. Members interact with other members, and are able to read messages on the BBS through their web browser or via their e-mail client.

How do you request access to the Members WebBoard?

1. Go to www.natca.org and click "Member BBS" on the top navigation tool bar.

2. Or go to <http://www.natca.org/bbs/access.htm>.

3. Select "new user."

4. Fill out the form and the appropriate information will be sent to you.

Public WebBoard

In addition to the web board designed for members, a public board is available for anyone who would like to join. Located at <http://bbs.natca.net:8080/~public>, this feature is designed to allow students, pilots and anyone interested in air traffic control or aviation to interact with NATCA's membership. Members who have an account on the Members WebBoard can log into the Public WebBoard with the same account.

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Privatization Team
 Read about Former White House Press Secretary Joe Lockhart who joined NATCA's fight on air traffic control privatization.

STARS
 Read about how the FAA's modernization deployment waterfall has turned into a trickle.

Legislation
 Learn about legislation the Senate passed opposing privatization of air traffic control.

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