

**Statement from the flight crew of FedEx #1026, 19 August 2020, in support of the Archie League Medal of Safety award for LAX tower controller Scott Moll**

It had already been a very long night for us, having begun our preflight planning in Newark, NJ just after midnight Eastern Daylight Time that morning. After a five and a half hour redeye flight to Los Angeles we were looking forward to being safely on the ground in just a few minutes. But our plans were about to take an unexpected change.

I am Robert Smith, and I was the captain of FedEx 1026 Heavy that morning.

The night sky was clear and the wind was light. Although there was some other air traffic at around 0400 local at LAX, it was nothing of course like the usual daytime controlled chaos there. Our plans for an on time arrival and much needed crew rest before the sun rose that morning changed shortly after we were cleared for an ILS approach to runway 24R. At about 2000 feet we received an unsafe left main landing gear indication while configuring our B-767 for landing. After having flown an uneventful flight across the country things now got busy real fast in our cockpit, and we let our tower controller know that we needed to discontinue our approach to work this problem. In a calm voice our tower controller simply cleared us straight ahead to 2000 feet and asked us what he could do help us out.

Over the course of the next 45 minutes we tried a number of different procedures to get our landing gear down and locked. Significantly, since we were fortunate enough to have plenty of fuel onboard, we flew two low approaches by the control tower in an attempt to ascertain the actual position of our left main landing gear. While it didn't occur to me at the time, I now realize just how busy our tower controller must have also been during this process. Between coordinating other traffic, peering through binoculars at us in the darkness, communicating with City Ops ground personnel and vehicles, and working directly with the Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighting crews, he was, I'm sure, just as busy as we were.

It's not when things go normal, but when challenges arise that we truly excel and show what we really are made of. That morning my crew was blessed to work alongside many teams of professionals who truly stepped up to the task at hand. A few of those other professionals included our own FedEx maintenance experts, The LAX approach controllers and the LAX Aircraft Rescue & Fire Fighting team. But the goal of this statement is to highlight the excellent work of the LAX tower controllers that morning. In short, from our perspective in a dark cockpit with a serious problem, they executed perfectly. It was as if they were along side us the whole way. Their comms with us were timely. Their questions and concerns relevant. If you haven't yet done so, I encourage you to listen to the entire ATC audio of this event. It is telling. And in hindsight, I

now realize that even that audio only tells part of the story. I was not privy to and can only imagine the conversations that went on in real time behind the scenes that morning.

Nearly 45 minutes from the first indication that we had a problem, and after definitively ascertaining from the tower that our left gear was completely retracted, we safely landed our stricken aircraft amid a shower of sparks on runway 25R , the longest runway at LAX. Even the fact that our controllers were able to secure that runway for our landing is meaningful since it was initially closed when we arrived in the LAX airspace that morning. I'm sure even that coordination behind the scenes is worthy of commendation. My hope here is to highlight my appreciation and admiration for those tower controller actions that morning that I am aware of. A lot more was going on that I never saw, but nevertheless directly benefited from.

As we say at FedEx to a team member for a job well done.....Bravo Zulu! Thank you for your professionalism, and for your significant contribution to an aircraft incident that, because of your actions, ended with a safe landing and minimal damage to our aircraft.

FedEx Captain Robert E. (Bob) Smith

