

Sisters and Brothers,

I am finally back from my visit to Anchorage and Seattle. I left last Sunday for Anchorage, which is a very long way from Boston! On Monday, I met with James Gentry, Ken Slauson, Dennis Warth and Steve Hauser, from Engineering Services to discuss the space situation that is developing in the Alaska Regional Office. It seems that the agency in DC wants to reduce the costs for leased space and they think Alaska is a good place to start. The agency has concocted a plan that would essentially move most of the FAA offices to the 3rd floor. These offices include ARC, AIR, and E&A. The problem with this is the "shoe-horn" approach the agency wants to take coupled with the fact that there has been no discussions with the union regarding this plan.

In fact while I was in Alaska, so was a team from ALO-100 out of DC. They had presented the ES management with a floor plan that wanted signed off by Friday! Well, that sure doesn't sound like "collaboration" or "pre-decisional involvement" as called for in the new Executive Order on Partnership, EO 13522. Surprisingly, there wasn't a manager that I spoke with that was in favor of this move or the heavy handed approach the agency has taken. So, needless to say they are happy to see NATCA ramp up the pressure. I did elevate this issue to the Collaborative Steering Committee (CSC). The CSC did meet today and discussed the issue at length. Late this afternoon, I received an update from Phil Barbarello the Eastern Region RVP and member of the team. This is what Phil reported: *"Yes a long discussion. Shelly (Mlakar, FAA LR) is reaching out to management there to see where they are at in the process. All agreed we want to do it collaboratively but they were not sure how far down the road management was already. She will report back next week with an answer for us."* I did explain that the management in Alaska isn't driving this and that ALO-100 is the group that needs to be brought in line. We also have administrative action that we can take in either a grievance or ULP. So we should have something next week, including our plan of attack.

Speaking of the CSC, they also have a couple of other issues of concern for Region X units.

These include, SMS for the E&A unit and trying to get them included in the already negotiated ATP/Controller agreement. Also on the CSC agenda is the "Overall Collaboration effort for the non-ATO LOB that NATCA represents. The SNS issue is close to resolution. The meeting this week has several briefings and no collaboration was discussed this week at all, but I expect something next week.

After the space meeting, Ken and I met Sandy and Heather Ihlen for lunch. Sandy and Heather are doing as well as can be expected considering that Larry has only been gone a month now.

They were both so appreciative of the cards and support that have received from their extended NATCA family. I presented Sandy with a NATCA retirement watch. This gesture touched Sandy deeply. They have a lot of work ahead of them as they move forward and try to pick up the pieces. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers.

Monday night I attended a Local EAL meeting which was held right at my hotel. After the general meeting we did take a little time to update the members on what was going on regarding the partnership/collaboration initiatives including Partnership for safety, the Collaboration Pilot Program, and the Workforce Engagement effort. At the end of the meeting we did push our legislative agenda and we did get most members to increase their contributions to the you-know-what (rhymes with Mac!)

On Tuesday, I attended the Workforce Engagement (WE) meeting for Tech Services at ZAN. I will get into the (WE) effort in more detail in a minute. This was my first visit out to ZAN.

When I worked for ANS-300 in the late nineties, I was fortunate to visit most of the ARTCC's. ZAN was one of the few left on my list to visit. The EE is an effort that is right now spearheaded by ATO as another method for turning employee attitudes around. No small task considering the FAA scored so poorly in the last Human Capitol Survey of Federal Employees.

The NATCA lead for WE is Russ Miller from ZFW. Here is how Russ explains WE:

Workforce Engagement is a new Agency initiative that is part of the broader, new approach the FAA is adopting to workplace relationships, mgmt style, labor relations, etc. There are several new programs - Collaboration, ATSAP, Professional Standards, "Just Culture," etc. NATCA fully supports Engagement (as well as the others listed), and I am NATCA's designated point of contact and Team Lead.

You may remember that the FAA scored very poorly - 214 out of 216 - in the 2008/2009 Federal "Best Places to Work" survey. The Administrator has directed (last winter?) that the underlying culture driving such a low score must be repaired. The HQ Organizational Effectiveness office is carrying this project, and they did 2 smart things right off the bat. First, they decided to get outside, expert contractor help, even if it was expensive. They extended a tentative 3 yr contract to Gallup Corporation (famous for their polls, and very big in corporate and organizational consulting). Second, they contacted NATCA and admitted that it wouldn't go anywhere without our help on the front and our support throughout. After some names were tossed around, the NEB asked me to Lead, and I was honored. That was back in April.

The initial meeting to see if we liked it and wanted to go forward was actually a "design team" meeting in Ft Worth. There were some 25 people in the 2 day mtg, 6 of us being NATCA En Routers, and including 2 Gallup pros. We liked it, and the NEB (thru Trish Gilbert) told the FAA we were fully in, so greenlight it. Gallup's contract got worked out, I started working by phone and email with the OE office, and we began planning another design meeting for Terminal folks. That meeting was held in Chicago in early June, this time with 7 other NATCA folks plus me, plus more mgmt, plus Gallup, etc. I began pushing for a "Region X" meeting soon after that to catch the concerns of NATCA's non-AT groups. In fact, I insisted on it (June 28th), and got great help from Mike MacDonald to support my argument. That meeting is coming up on the afternoon of July 28th and all day the 29th, to be held out at Seattle ARTCC. I would like you to attend and provide your perspective, etc; please advise if you are available so I can notify the Agency.

Originally the Seattle meeting included 2 E&A people plus 4 non-ATO NATCA people, picked from all over the US. We were not specifically picking FacReps and were trying to get the most diverse group possible with only 6 names. But the Agency informed NATCA the Friday before the meeting that they weren't ready for non-ATO groups to get this, so we had a slightly different, more Seattle-based meeting (for now).

The program, in a nutshell, is survey-driven nationally, with detailed analysis reported back locally. The response to the weak areas identified will be determined locally, with local buy-in. I

don't want to steal Gallup's thunder in explaining why their model works, but I will tell you that the previous NATCA groups came way from the meetings enthusiastic over this attempt to start making things better. Of course, everybody is plenty skeptical, including the mgmt people who came to the meetings, but there are good reasons why this could work and why NATCA must support it.

Last week, Kelvin attended the LR Strategy meeting in Miami. This is the group of reps, one per region, who are trying to get a handle on the global grievance issue. They are tasked with reviewing all the national grievances and ensuring that NATCA is on the right course when it comes to selecting which grievances are moved for arbitration. I am summarizing this group's activities and I am sure that Kelvin will put something out regarding the group's activities. One piece of the global strategy is to increase our regional advocate cadre, so that these advocates can take on the bulk of the arbitrations that are now being done by the National Office Staff. This will free the NO LR staff to work more national issues including FLRA, organizing, petitions, research and more.

We also continue working on our membership drive planning. Jim D'Agati has been busy developing a new website which we hope to unveil in the not too distant future. Meanwhile, Alex Caldwell is developing some of the content for us and will be instrumental in this effort.

The overall plan, scheduled to begin after convention and run through the ratification and implementation of the Staff Specialist, Flight Service, and Multi Unit agreements, will include incentives, focused lunches, site visits by NATCA leadership, and communications (the new website, posters, articles in NATCA publications) and will include an Open Season for the E&A unit. There will be more to come on this topic.

We also have a new volunteer for the NATCA Reloaded Committee, Dan Stefko. Dan has a lot on his plate including the EEA Local President and the NRX Rep to the NATCA Realignment Committee. So if Dan asks you for any information, please be sure to cooperate promptly.

This week, Tech Ops management is scheduled to meet with the FAA CFO on August 6th. I expect that sometime after that meeting, the FAA will officially end ESEP. I don't know how specifically that will be accomplished but I am confident that it will occur. There will then be a meeting August 24-26 in Atlanta with a small group of FAA management and NATCA Reps to discuss a process for moving forward post ESEP. After this meeting, we plan on reconvening the workgroups that met at CMEL previously to move the process along. So it figures to be a busy month of August.

There is much more going on for sure, including Multi-unit negotiations and IG investigations. Unfortunately, those issues need to be kept confidential for now but I wanted to let you know that your NATCA leadership continues to work on our members behalf every single day!

Finally, we will be conducting some Pre-Convention, Go-To-Meetings to go over the proposed amendments to the NATCA Constitution and Standing Rules. We are planning 2 of these net-meetings that will be available to all members. I will be sending out specifics later on this week but I think the meetings will be the 2nd week of August.

As I close this update, I also want to let you know that I will be taking a couple of days off this week, Monday and Tuesday, to recharge and spend a couple of days with my family, particularly before the boys head back to college. July was a very busy month with me on the road 3 of the 4 weeks and traveling each Sunday. So I will be back in the office on Wednesday.

Until next update, be well.

In Solidarity,

Mike MacDonald
NATCA Region X RVP
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