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## **Pilots Committed to Sharing in the Success of Mesa Air Group *Management Must Recognize Pilots' Contributions, Sacrifices***

PHOENIX—The pilots of Mesa Air Group (MAG), who are represented by the Air Line Pilots Association, Int'l (ALPA), began negotiations with management this week for a competitive wage and benefits package that recognizes the pilots' sacrifices and contributions to the airline over the years, provides incentives to retain qualified professionals, and makes Mesa the airline of choice for prospective pilots.

“We are at a critical juncture and must act quickly to make the necessary changes that will ensure the long-term viability of our airline,” said First Officer Marcin Kolodziejczyk, chairman of the Mesa Air Group unit at ALPA. “No longer is being ‘the cheapest’ a guarantee to winning new business. Mesa needs to focus on rebuilding its brand as one that respects its pilots, values our contributions, and continues to provide our partners with a quality product. The pilots have done their part by consistently delivering outstanding service to our partners and our passengers. We expect Mesa management to do their part by negotiating a fair agreement.”

Much has changed since the pilots were last at the bargaining table with MAG management. In December 2008, the pilots narrowly ratified a short-term agreement with significant work-rule improvements that brought them in line with the industry in many key areas. However, provisions such as increasing captain pay rates and improving health care and other benefits were not addressed in those negotiations due to the precarious financial situation of the company, and they remain at levels that were negotiated in their 2003 contract.

A year ago, MAG entered into Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection; the company recently emerged after restructuring the airline and its fleet to meet the needs of its partners. The union was actively involved in working to protect pilots' rights while at the same time ensuring the company's survival. It was a painful process that, among other things, resulted in hundreds of pilots being furloughed, displaced from their bases, and/or downgraded from captain to first officer.

Meanwhile, the pool of qualified, professional pilots is shrinking, and industry analysts forecast a severe pilot shortage within the next 10 years due to pilot retirements and the decreasing number of new pilots entering the profession. Competition for qualified pilots is already fierce, and many regional and mainline

carriers are currently hiring pilots on an ongoing basis. Several of these carriers have also made significant improvements to their pilot agreements to assist them in retaining and attracting qualified professionals.

The MAG pilots intend to make similar improvements to their contract. MAG is now a stronger, leaner airline with an aggressive plan to maintain current business, secure new business, and reward senior management, aircraft lessors, suppliers, and other shareholders.

“Mesa’s pilots must also be rewarded for their contributions to this airline, namely for our efforts in maintaining operational excellence,” said Kolodziejczyk. “As one of the largest stakeholders in Mesa, the pilots are an integral part to the company’s current and future plans, and we deserve to share in its success.”

ALPA represents nearly 53,000 pilots at 38 airlines in the United States and Canada, including the nearly 1,400 pilots—and 480 who are on furlough—at Mesa Air Group. Mesa Air Group includes Mesa Airlines, Freedom Airlines, and *go!*, the company’s interisland carrier in Hawaii. Pilots fly as United Express, US Airways Express, and *go!*. For more information, visit [www.MesaPilots.com](http://www.MesaPilots.com).

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