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Contract or Self-Help by January

American Airlines Flight Attendants to Hold Simulated Strike Demonstrations on Nov. 18

Eules, Texas – To underscore their determination to achieve a fair and just contract, American Airlines Flight Attendants will conduct simulated strike demonstrations at airports across the country on November 18, the 16th anniversary of their historic strike, the Association of Professional Flight Attendants (APFA) announced in a mailing sent this week to 18,000 members.

A select number of American Airlines flights will be designated as “Red Flights,” where Flight Attendants assigned to the flight will wear a red disc under their union pin with the words “Got Guts,” signifying this flight would not be operating if this were a real strike.

APFA’s OUR TURN Around campaign was launched late last summer with all Flight Attendants wearing a two-sided disc behind their APFA pin on the yellow “Got Union” side to show membership solidarity.

“This is only a symbolic demonstration to show management that Flight Attendants are willing and able to do whatever is necessary to get a fair contract,” said APFA President Laura Glading. “Our goal is to reach an agreement before self-help, but if push comes to shove we will take that step.”

According to the mailing, APFA and management have scheduled additional contract negotiations through January 2010, but if no agreement is reached the APFA will ask the National Mediation Board (NMB) to allow APFA to move to a 30-day cooling off period - the final step before self-help.

Self-help – an actual strike or other job action – is not permitted until after a 30-day cooling off period, which only the NMB can initiate under the Railway Labor Act (RLA). The mailing summarizes the entire negotiations process under the RLA.

“We pledge that we will not disrupt service for our passengers during the upcoming holiday season,” Glading continued. “After January, it remains to be seen.”

APFA and American have been in negotiations for more than 18 months. By January more than 100 bargaining sessions will have been held and management has yet to put a pay proposal on the table. The company says any new contract must be ‘Zero Sum’, meaning any improvement in wages, vacation or any other benefit be offset by a concession of equal value, APFA said in the mailing.

The airline’s top five executives have taken multimillion dollar bonuses and salary hikes totaling more than 2,500 times the gains of Flight Attendants since 2003, as documented in charts and graphs in the mailing. The company also recently raised its liquidity and financing by \$4.6 billion, getting a “strong vote of confidence from strategic investors,” according to American Chairman and CEO Gerald Arpey.

“American’s top executives continue to enjoy bonuses and salary increases while Flight Attendants endure only sacrifices. It’s clear management has the financial resources to negotiate a ratifiable agreement and it’s time to abandon their ‘Zero Sum’ strategy and put some real money on the table,” said Glading. “We’ve worked hard to narrow the outstanding issues in these negotiations and there’s no reason we can’t reach an agreement when we go to the table in January.”

The mailing outlines the key outstanding articles – compensation, expenses, vacation, sick leave, health benefits, hours of service, and others – in negotiations, summarizing what separates APFA and management at the bargaining table.

A copy of the complete mailing can be found at www.apfa.org.

APFA is the nation's largest independent Flight Attendant union representing more than 18,000 American Airlines Flight Attendants. www.apfa.org