Calling All Envoy Agents: Support Our Bargaining Team

It’s here! Bargaining for the first Envoy CWA contract for more than 3,800 employees began April 27-28, 2016. The Envoy Bargaining Team has been at work for weeks, preparing for the first meetings with management. Members elected to the Bargaining Team are: Bryce Rea (JLN), Chris Haight (TVC), and Janet Padgett (LAX). Alternates on the team include Michelle Charleston (BHM), Colin Yates (SMF), and James McKnight (MIA). In accordance with the results of the recent Bargaining Survey, the team is making better pay, job security, and a fair grievance procedure top priorities.

The team has asked all members to show solidarity by wearing What’s Our Worth (WOW) buttons starting April 27. Envoy agents will carry this slogan proudly through to the end of the fight for a contract. And Local leaders will soon begin a postcard campaign to collect personal statements about how Envoy’s low wages affect agents’ daily lives.

American Agents: Info About Membership Cards

Over the past couple of months, collection of union dues from members has been delayed in some cases. Although the majority of our 9,000 new members are now in the system, the company has not completed processing of some dues deduction forms, and there are still some members who have not signed and turned in those forms so paycheck deductions can begin.

The company is moving quickly to get all signed forms processed. If you haven’t already signed a card, please contact a steward or Local officer as soon as possible.
On April 14, Envoy/American Airlines Agents in airports across the country joined in a global Fight for $15 Day of Action. Tina Moore (MKE) attended a rally in Milwaukee and explained how urgent the need for a living wage for all airport workers is:

Like most of my coworkers, I make less than $11 an hour. As a mother of four I know the struggle of trying to raise a family on low wages. If I didn’t have family support it wouldn’t even pay for me to work. Day care alone would be four times what I bring home.

Every quarter I see the reports on the company’s record profits, but we never seem to benefit from the success. In four hours our CEO makes what most of us do in an entire year. How is this fair? We are the key to the company’s success yet many of us work 60 hours a week just to pay the rent.

Excitement about the Fight for $15 movement is building throughout the country, with victories in New York State and California and now a major new push among low-wage airport workers.

On March 31, hundreds of baggage handlers, aircraft cleaners, custodians, and wheelchair attendants at nine U.S. airports went on strike for 24 hours to bring attention to the fact that most of them make far below a living wage. Many even make less than the legal minimum wage.

CWA passenger service employees are supporting Airport Workers United and their Fight for $15 and a union.

Facts about Low-Wage Work at Airports:

In 2015, the airline industry reported record profits of over $29 billion, but thousands of airport workers are in a daily struggle to make ends meet. They need fair wages, benefits, and the right to organize without intimidation or surveillance. The contract workers’ fight matters to us, as passenger service agents, because:

- Everyone deserves the dignity of decent working conditions, benefits, and a living wage.
- Airlines will continue to outsource more of our work to low-road contractors if we don’t end poverty wages for good.
- When we raise standards for low-wage workers, we gain more power at the bargaining table.

We stand with our brothers and sisters who deserve better. To find out more about the issues, take a look at the Airport Workers United web site (airportworkersunited.org/) and their Facebook page (facebook.com/AirportWorkersUnited). Then talk to your Local mobilizers about how you can get involved.
Assaults on Agents Are On the Rise: We Need Your Stories

Across the country, airline customer service agents are under assault, and the AFL-CIO’s Transportation Trades Department (TTD) needs our help to strengthen federal laws to protect us all.

Agents report that passengers attack them verbally and physically, and that these assaults are increasing. The attacks include racial slurs, punches in the face, thrown luggage, torn clothes, and worse. If this has happened to you, your representatives at CWA need to know. Please go to american-agents.org/communications/survey/ to fill in a brief questionnaire about your experiences.

Ed Wytkind provides shocking details about this growing problem in a recent blog post:

*Then there’s the horrific 2014 incident in which a United Airlines customer service representative working at the Ft. Lauderdale-Hollywood International Airport was punched, dragged by the hair on the ground and repeatedly kicked in the stomach by an enraged passenger. Multiple witnesses reported that the attack was completely unprovoked, and described how the defenseless customer service agent tried to shield herself from the attacker. ... While the passenger in that particular incident was arrested and charged with battery, most perpetrators of these kinds of crimes are rarely held accountable for their actions. In fact, in the vast majority of incidents, violent passengers are allowed to continue on their trips.*

**What can we, as CWA Agents, do to help?**

1. **Support the legislation** spearheaded by Rep. John Garamendi (D-CA), that would extend to airport customer service representatives the same federal protections applied to pilots and flight attendants. The provision is part of the House Aviation Innovation and Reauthorization (AIRR) Act.

   The Senate’s version of this bill currently does not extend these protections to customer service reps, but requires a federal study of the problem instead. Call your Representative and your Senator to let them know you support immediate action, not more studies.

2. **Share your stories.** If you have experienced a verbal or physical assault by a passenger, please share your story. The more evidence we have, the more likely we are to force lawmakers to listen and make changes in the law. Share your information by filling out the form here: american-agents.org/communications/survey/.

You’ll find more information and a detailed policy statement here on the TTD website at ttd.org.

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Piedmont Mobilization Starts Now!

As we approach the start of contract bargaining later this year, it’s more important than ever that every member get involved. The stakes could not be higher. We’ll be fighting for fair wages and better working conditions for every Piedmont agent.

**When Does Our Contract Expire?**

Technically, as airline employees, our contract becomes “amendable,” and doesn’t expire. On February 5, 2017, if we have not agreed to bargain for a new contract, the old one will stay in effect until a new contract is bargained and ratified. We can begin bargaining 2-6 months before the amendable date, and we are eager to get to the table to fight for improvements.

Our bargaining team needs a unified membership backing them up and presenting a united front to management. We’ll face some tough challenges, including getting health insurance and paid sick leave for our part-timers. To win the improvements we deserve, all of us have to stand up and be counted.

**Effective Mobilization Means Communication**

If our mobilization is going to work, we need the most accurate, up-to-date contact information for everyone. Over the next several weeks, we’d like you to help us connect in several ways:

- Mobilizers and stewards will ask you to fill in cards with contact information.
- This summer, we’ll send out a simple Bargaining Survey to find out what issues matter most to you, so that the bargaining team can serve every member better.
- We hope you’ll like our new Facebook page, at facebook.com/PiedmontAgentsConnected, where we’ll post updates and build solidarity across all of our stations. Please share it with your co-workers!
Welcome and congratulations to our new members and elected officers in Locals 4201 and 6001! The leadership teams for both Locals are in the midst of training and setting up their organizations, and they thank all members for their patience and encouragement.

Local 4201

Local 4201 represents American Airlines agents at stations in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, and Illinois, including the American hub at ORD. Members elected a group of dedicated officers last fall, including:

- President Jackie Taylor
- Vice President Carolyn Marsalek
- Treasurer Liz Vaca
- Secretary Marilyn Cruz-Harper
- Area Representative Laura Crosley (IN & MI)
- Area Representative Renee Ribant (ORD)

All of the Local 4201 officers say they are looking forward to meeting with members, visiting all the stations, and getting feedback and suggestions as to how the Local can best serve everyone’s needs. After being sworn in officially in January, the Local 4201 team completed training courses and hit the ground running, already posting a victory in their first grievance case. “We’re all excited to get started, and learn the ropes in our new positions,” said President Jackie Taylor. “We want to hear from our members about their priorities, and we want to put together a strong legislative program in this election year.”

Local 4201 held its first steward training classes on April 19 and 21. Please email Ron Honse (rhonse@cwa-union.org ) if you’d like to join the team.

Local 6001

In Local 6001, members elected the following new group of officers:

- President Tammy Woods
- Vice President Donna Bryant
- Treasurer Natalie Bledsoe
- Area Representative Jackie Taylor-Wells
- Area Representative Juanita Brown
- Area Representative Angela Ellington
- Area Representative Barrye Fregia
- Area Representative Shiela Bachtell

The officers are being trained and sworn in this month and are eagerly preparing to serve members in District 6, covering Texas, Oklahoma, Missouri, Kansas, and Arkansas. They are planning station meetings to check in across the District and are building a new web site and communications tools to serve all agents. Membership meetings are in the works and will be announced soon.

President Tammy Woods says, “We couldn’t be more proud to serve our fellow members in Local 6001. We anticipate training at least 150 stewards, starting in late April. We especially look forward to getting the expertise of LUS employees who have been waiting in the wings as 6001 gets up and running. And we’d like to welcome all the Texas members formerly with IBT as well as St. Louis and Kansas City members who were formerly with CWA Local 1171. Glad to have you in the 6001 family!”