

Flight Attendant, customer fury fly at US Airways

by Bend_Weekly_News_Sources

Flight attendants at US Airways and America West Airlines, represented by the Association of Flight Attendants-CWA (AFA-CWA), are frustrated with merger-related operational failures that have alienated loyal US Airways customers. Flight attendants at both carriers are also furious with management over slow-paced contract negotiations and with rampant violations of both existing contracts.

"Flight attendants and passengers are experiencing a shared frustration over the endless problems related to management's oversight of this merger," said Gary Richardson, America West Master Executive Council President. "Flight attendants are suffering, customers are suffering, and the only people happy are top US Airways executives, who gleefully continue to line their pockets with stock option payouts that, to date, have netted them over 20 million dollars."

"Management has repeatedly failed to acknowledge the valuable role flight attendants as safety professionals," said Mike Flores, US Airways Master Executive Council President. "Management must begin to treat flight attendants and our loyal customers as assets rather than liabilities. Everything management touches, they break."

"Management's misguided customer and labor policies are jeopardizing chances for a smooth and successful merger," added Richardson.

Last week, US Airways' reservation system failed on the east coast. The breakdown disrupted thousands of passenger itineraries and caused abrupt changes to employee travel benefits, violating current contracts between US Airways and AFA-CWA, as well as other labor groups. This is the most recent example of how unqualified and ill prepared this management team is at merging America West and US Airways.

"AFA-CWA will not participate in a virtual merger," Flores said. "This airline will not merge until contracts are signed with labor and promises are kept with customers."

Negotiations to merge the US Airways and America West flight attendant contracts began in January 2006.

"After almost 14 months of intensive negotiations, we've only reached agreements in six out of 35 sections and have yet to address serious economic issues," said Richardson.

For over 60 years, the Association of Flight Attendants has been serving as the voice for flight attendants in the workplace, in the aviation industry, in the media and on Capitol Hill. More than 55,000 flight attendants at 20 airlines come together to form AFA-CWA, the world's largest flight attendant union. AFA is part of the 700,000-member strong Communications Workers of America (CWA), AFL-CIO.

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