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Today's Other Headlines

December 15, 2010
Airlines cancel flights ahead of Greece's general strike set for Wednesday
By: Cathy Buyck
Air traffic to and from Greece will be severely disrupted on Wednesday owing to a general strike called by Greece's two biggest unions—private sector GSEE and public sector ADEDY—in protest of an overhaul of the country's labor laws and austerity measures.

“As a result of a 24-hour strike of CAA and Air Traffic Control Personnel in Greece, Aegean Airlines is being forced to cancel all flights on its network on Wednesday, Dec. 15,” Greece's largest carrier said on its website. Also, Olympic Air confirmed it was forced to cancel all its flights.

Bag fees, change fees generate \$1.5 billion for US airlines in third quarter
By: Linda Blachly
US airlines collected a total of \$1.5 billion in baggage fees and reservation cancellation/change fees in the 2010 third quarter, up 10.6% from \$1.35 billion in the third quarter of 2009 according to US Dept. of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Baggage fees in the third quarter accounted for \$906.4 million, up 22.5% from \$739.8 million in the year-ago period. Reservation cancellation/change fees accounted for \$590.4 million, down 3.8% from \$613.5 million in year-ago quarter.

The top US airline in terms of baggage fee revenue was Delta Air Lines, which reported third-quarter revenue of \$259.5 million, more than doubling its revenue of \$129.5 million in the year-ago quarter when Northwest Airlines reported separately. American Airlines reported the next highest level: \$151.2 million, up 26.5%

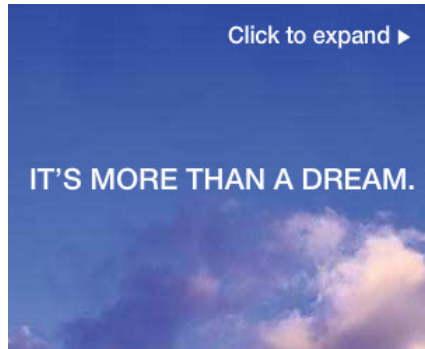
DL also led the way in reservation cancellation/change fees, raising \$183.3 million, up 64% from last year's quarter when NWA results were not consolidated, and AA reported \$117.7 million, down 2.3% from the 2009 third quarter.

BA's Unite cabin crew to vote on possible strike action
By: Cathy Buyck
British Airways on Tuesday received notice from Unite, the trade union representing the majority of the airline's cabin crew, of its intention to ballot members for strike action. The voting, on more than five outstanding issues, is due to begin on Dec. 21 and close one month later, on Jan. 21, Unite said, thus sparing BA from any industrial action during the busy

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Christmas and New Year holiday season if cabin crew members vote to strike.

"Four of the five outstanding issues are no-cost issues for BA and are about treating cabin crew with dignity, respect and ending the climate of persecution," Unite Joint General Secretary Tony Woodley said in a statement. "The fifth item is about stopping BA from imposing a near-minimum-waged work force and killing BA's brand."

BA described the union's behavior as "dysfunctional" and noted that "Unite struck a deal in October and reneged on it. The union agreed last week to hold further talks with us, but has instead issued a strike ballot." It said that industrial action would be a "grossly disproportionate response to the issues that Unite continues to press."

As with past strike actions and threats, the carrier said it will be able to operate normal timetables at Gatwick and London City airport, a substantial proportion of its short-haul program and all of its long-haul operation at its main hub at Heathrow should a walkout occur.

BA and Unite have been engaged in a bitter dispute for nearly two years, initially over changes to working practices for cabin crew on long-haul flights from LHR (*ATW Daily News, Nov. 4*). The dispute has escalated to include issues as the restoration of staff travel concessions and binding arbitration of all cabin crew disciplinary cases related to the original dispute.

Flights back to normal as Finnair cabin crew strike ends

Finnair announced Monday that its flights are "back to normal" after cabin crew members went back to work "without delay" Friday following agreement on a new wage proposal made by state mediator Esa Lonka.

The strike—which also expanded last week to include fuel delivery, catering, check-in services, ground handling, de-icing, cargo and postal services—forced Finnair to ground more than two-thirds of its flights since the strike began Nov. 30 (*ATW Daily News, Dec. 9*). The carrier had warned it would lose as much as €2.5 million (\$3.3 million) for each day the strike continued, according to Reuters.

Labor News

Southwest Airlines stock clerks, represented by International Brotherhood of Teamsters, rejected a tentative agreement calling for a five-year contract through Aug. 16, 2013 (*ATW Daily News, Oct. 12*). Earlier this year, SWA and IBT, which represents the carrier's more than 170 stock clerks, agreed to seek assistance with the National Mediation Board.

In a statement, SWA Executive VP and CEO Mike Van de Ven said, "Both sides put a lot of effort into getting to this point, and for this agreement to be rejected after assistance from a mediator is a disappointment for all involved."

Alaska Airlines and the International Assn. of Machinists and Aerospace Workers Tuesday jointly announced a tentative agreement on a proposed three-year contract for the carrier's 2,600 clerical, office and passenger service employees.

Among the provisions in the proposed contract are wage increases, job security protections, improved productivity measures, a \$1,500 signing bonus and

participation in Alaska Airlines' Performance-Based Pay annual incentive plan. In a statement, IAM said the agreement also holds the line on health care costs for employees and provides for a program allowing reservations employees to work from home.

A ratification vote is expected before the end of February.

Operation and Maintenance

MTU Maintenance Hanover extended its existing contract with TAM by covering 57 additional V2500 engines for the carrier's A320-family fleet. The volume of the contract is expected earn an additional €500 million (\$652.8 million) by 2019.

Lufthansa Technik AG and **Wizz Air** reached a five-year line maintenance services agreement including A-checks for eight Airbus A320s based in Bucharest, Timisoara and Cluj, as well as a further two A320s based in Prague, beginning in February.

Turkish Technic signed maintenance service agreements with Yakutia Airlines for one 737NG base maintenance C check and one 737NG base maintenance A check. Maintenance activities will be performed this month at Turkish Technic's facilities in Istanbul.

StandardAero signed 10-year maintenance agreement with Rex Regional Express subsidiary Pel-Air Aviation, covering Pratt & Whitney PT6A-42 engines on their fleet of King Air B200 aircraft. Agreement includes optional two-year extension.

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1 Based on Vincentric's November 2009 update comparing police editions of the 2010 Chevy Impala, 2010 Chevy Tahoe, 2010 Ford Crown Victoria, and the 2010 Dodge Charger.

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