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The Contributions of Today's AMT's - AMT Day May 24, 2011

I thought I would take a moment and thank all of our TWU AMT's at American Airlines and American Eagle on this AMT Day. Today's Aircraft Maintenance Technicians are aviation's unsung heroes and heroines. AMT's have a responsibility to provide a safe aircraft for passengers and flight crews. Without them, there would be no aviation industry. Yet, they essentially go unrecognized and underappreciated, not only by the public, but by others within the industry.

Today's AMT's face unbelievable amounts of pressure, with the airline industry always pushing for 'on-time' departures. There is pressure to minimize delays, and the overwhelming knowledge that even the "slightest" mistake could spell disaster. Each entry in a logbook comes with liability, AMT's are required to meet FAA standards or risk losing their license. For the airline, the bottom line is profit; for the AMT, the bottom line is safety. It is the responsibility of AMT's to perform scheduled maintenance required by the FAA, as well as making necessary repairs to aircraft. AMT's inspect and make repairs to a variety of equipment vital to the safety of passengers and flight crews' day in and day out.

In recent years, AMT's have been faced with unprecedented challenges. Economic slowdown, low fares, and high fuel prices have plagued the airline industry. AMT's have been faced with layoffs, changes in work rules, reductions in pay, and uncertainty of the future. Since 2000, we have seen over 25,000 maintenance jobs leave airlines in our country alone. Within the airline industry, the very lifeline of these hard-working men and women seems to be increasingly in jeopardy, with carriers filing bankruptcy, terminating pension plans and outsourcing more and more work even to overseas facilities. In times such as these when our country and our world are filled with turbulence and uncertainty, the AMT profession demands much more diligence than ever before.

With May 24th each year designated as AMT day, we are giving the AMT's of today the acknowledgement that they deserve. AMT's should hold their heads high every day, knowing that they are a vital part of the aviation industry. We are proud that these men and women are recognized for the critical and essential job that they do. Not only is the safety of others a major factor in the job scope of an AMT, but in accomplishing their job their own safety is sometimes put into peril as well. This is not a job that anyone can do; it is a job for the dedicated and skilled.

At American Airlines the TVVU AMT's and all our TWU classifications can be proud for achieving what no other airline has done, that is maintaining all the aircraft overhaul in house. While most airlines have chosen to outsource the majority or all of the aircraft overhaul. This is due to the hard work and ingenuity of our members which has positioned us to be more competitive.

In times such as these, when our country and our world are filled with turbulence and uncertainty, our professions demand much more than duplication of the past or in this case duplication of the other legacy airlines maintenance organizations fate.

Having May 24th dedicated to them each year would be a chance for them to join together, support each other, and remind them of just how important they are. Not to mention reminding the public and others within the industry of how pertinent these men and women are to our daily lives.

It is not an exaggeration to say that our unity is critical to our success. We must never forget that our strength is our unity, not only with our fellow TWU brothers and sisters, but also with the long line of TWU members who have fought before us for the rights and privileges we have today.

With the current mediation for the Mechanic and Related members at American and the imminent American Eagle divestiture, more than ever, this is the time for the faithful, the committed, and the strong. It is incumbent upon us all to keep striving to maintain the strength and quality of our professions. I look forward to working with the Locals as we continue to face the challenges ahead.

In closing, again we want to thank you for the job that you do each day and know that we are proud that we represent you. As aviation professionals, we must remember we are all serving something greater in the interest of public safety.

Fraternally,

Garry Drummond

Director Air Transport Division

Transport Workers Union, AFL-CIO

"That which unites us is must be stronger than that which divides us. We can concentrate on what unites us, and secure the future for all our children; or we can concentrate on what divides us, and fail duty through argument and resentment and waste." RFK