

CWA AGENTS CONNECTED



A Newsletter to Connect CWA Agents

This is our second issue of the CWA Agents Connected newsletter. CWA represents more than 20,000 agents at American, Piedmont, and Envoy. We cover stories of interest to agents at all three airlines. If you'd like to suggest a story or share a picture of you and your co-workers taking action to build our union, email us at info@cwaagents.org.

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Lobbying for Airport Rage Protections

Chris Kress, an agent who has worked for American Airlines for 22 years, is traveling from Dallas-Fort Worth to Washington, DC, in June to lobby members of Congress on the issue of assaults against passenger service agents. Chris has been a victim of verbal and physical abuse by passengers on multiple occasions, including an attack by a passenger who broke the gate door to the jet bridge after she'd closed it. "I'm going to Washington on behalf of all my co-workers who experience abusive passenger behavior every day," says Chris. "Sadly, airlines are not doing what's necessary to keep us safe. It's past time legislators took action to protect us."

You can join Chris in telling Congress to protect passenger service agents by signing this petition:
<https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2868144/PSA-Assault-Petition/>

Across the country assaults on agents are increasing. Now CWA is supporting a major legislative effort to get the solid, federal protections that our members deserve. What the effort needs are personal stories from agents who have experienced verbal and physical assaults in order to persuade Congress of the serious nature of this problem. CWA members already have shared harrowing stories of passengers slapping them in the face, shoving computer monitors at them, and illegally videotaping them.

If you've been a victim of an attack while at work, CWA wants to hear from you. Your experiences, in your own words, are powerful tools to persuade reluctant lawmakers of the need to act. Please tell your story here:
<http://american-agents.org/communications/survey/>

Even if you have not personally experienced an assault, you can take action today: Sign the petition and share it with your fellow agents: <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2868144/PSA-Assault-Petition/>

**Assaults on Agents
Are On the Rise:
We Need Your Stories**

#AssaultShouldntFly



Setting Up a New Local at American: Talking with Tammy Woods of Local 6001

As the brand new president of the new CWA Local 6001, Tammy Woods has a lot on her plate, but she wouldn't have it any other way. So far, Local 6001 has trained 50 stewards in grievance handling, investigations, and contract interpretation. Stewards will return for more training later this year in mobilizing and issues related to the Family and Medical Leave Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Recently, we got a chance to talk to Tammy about the progress she and her team of new officers are making and her hopes for the coming year.

How many members do you have in 6001?

I've got close to 4,000 members spread from Dallas-Fort Worth to smaller cities all over the region. I'm really looking forward to visiting all the smaller cities—I hope I can do that within 6 months.

What's keeping you busy, and what are your priorities in your first few months in office?

It's been a learning experience launching this new office. We're really building a brand new local, with newly elected officers, almost from the ground up! Many of our members are new to unions in general, and they need help interpreting the contract and understanding what our union can do for them, so our steward training is the priority.

Is it hard to recruit and train stewards?

It just takes time, and we need a lot of people. We'll need 150 at least. We trained 50 people in the first weeks of June. It's a slow process because we need to keep each session small so that we can answer everybody's questions.

What would you say to someone who's considering becoming a steward, but doesn't know much about it?

The real key to being a good steward is a willingness to learn on the job. After your initial training, you often have to do research to find the best answers for people's problems and questions. A steward's job is the most important one in the local.

What are some of the most frequent questions you're getting from members?

Right now we're getting a lot of questions about mandatory overtime due to the extreme weather. We're also getting questions about why the company is slow in taking dues out of everyone's paychecks. We're not sure what the problem is on the American side, but we're pushing for answers. The company is still integrating its departments, so that seems to be part of the reason for the slow response time.

Tell us about your plans for the next year.

What I'd like to do is bring the members along with me on the journey as we decide what our priorities are and how to achieve them. It's their local, not mine. I've been working from 6:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. lately, and a lot of other people are in the same boat, but it's worth it because we can see the progress. I think communication is the most important thing, so we want our web site and email list and Facebook page to be in good shape as soon as possible.

I'm really looking forward to our first member meeting on Saturday, June 25th. I want the members to feel free to ask me anything, so I am anticipating a very long day with a local of this size.

Thanks to Tammy for the interview! The Local 6001 Executive Board met for the first time on May 25th, worked on their budget, and as of early June have someone in the office full-time. If you have questions, contact Tammy via email at tammywoodscwa6001@gmail.com.

Envoy Agents Fight for the Safety for Everyone

Safety and health of employees should always be at the top of the list of priorities for any company. Currently, employees at Envoy are battling on behalf of their brothers and sisters to address serious safety concerns at two airports, Lexington Bluegrass and Chicago O’Hare.

Before Christmas last year, Steven Ward and seven other agents began their fight to get Envoy and airport officials at LEX to recognize a list of issues that includes a broken belt and baggage system, drain grate covers that don’t fit and are dangerous to walk on, catwalks with sharp metal brackets that rip clothing and skin, and bird droppings coating jet bridges and equipment. Steven and his fellow workers decided to ask CWA for advice when complaints to airport authorities went unanswered.

“CWA staff has been helpful. They told us our rights and the procedures we needed to go through, as well as the kinds of questions we should be asking of management. We learned that inspectors have to speak to employees, and when that didn’t happen, we filed a new complaint and are in the process of getting a new inspection.”

The agents at LEX and ORD say it’s important for all agents to know their rights and speak up to protect themselves and their co-workers, even if the process takes a long time. “Instead of living with dangerous conditions, you can take action,” Steven says. “OSHA and some state agencies (which is the case in Kentucky) are supposed to inspect airports and investigate any complaints about unsafe equipment or environments. I hope other stations will learn from what’s happening in Lexington and Chicago, and contact CWA for help.”

Don't forget to follow and share the latest news on our Envoy Agents Facebook page (facebook.com/envoyagents/) and check out important announcements on our Envoy Agents web page (envoyagents.org).



Piedmont Agents Are Mobilizing!

Piedmont agents have been busy throughout May and June signing mobilization cards. Agents are joining committees and signing on to be part of the mobilization effort that is rolling out this summer in anticipation of bargaining later this year. The Bargaining Team greatly appreciates all the effort everyone has already put in.

If you have not completed a mobilization card yet, you can fill one out online at <http://sgiz.mobi/s3/Piedmont-Mobilization-Card>



In addition to all the activity around bargaining mobilization, Charlotte-based Piedmont agents were pleased to have Representative Alma Adams (D-NC) join in their Fight for 15 action. Members in Charlotte also had a chance to learn more about the Political Action Fund at a recent union meeting. Thanks to all who attended!



Norwegian Air International (NAI) wants the U.S. government's permission to launch service in this country that will violate our trade rules, using flight crews under Singaporean and Thai contracts to drive down wages and benefits. CWA is joining organizations that represent more than 200,000 aviation workers to ask the Obama Administration to #DenyNAI. The airline already evades Norwegian labor and tax laws by basing its corporation in Ireland. Through a subsidiary NAI wants to circumvent worker protections, and the U.S. Transportation Department is on the verge of allowing it—unless Congress stops it.

AFA-CWA President Sara Nelson explains, "The White House has said that [NAI] can have an exception to the rules that have been in place . . . *just so they can shop around for the cheapest labor all around the world.* . . . If that happens, we don't get to bargain for our contracts, have a say at work, or fight for the best health and safety rules. We have got to tell the White House and Congress that they need to enforce the agreement they made." What can you do to stop this race to the bottom in terms of airline standards and respect for workers' rights? Tell your members of the House of Representatives to get on board in supporting HR 5090 to enforce the labor standards negotiated in the EU-US Open Skies Agreement here: <http://www.afacwa.org/denynai-takeaction-congress>

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