



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

intercom:

Office of Public Affairs
Alaskan Region
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January 1987

87-01

*It's a
Brand New
Year!*

1987

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Travel advances

from: Frank Cunningham
AAL-1

We continue to receive concerns regarding dissimilar treatment of individuals requesting travel advances. The primary cause stems from the changes to the Federal Travel Regulations which became effective July 1, 1986, and limited travel advances to 80 percent of the estimated travel expense.

In accordance with 5 U.S.C. 7116(a)(7), as incorporated in DOT Order 3710.4, in situations where a government-wide rule or regulation is in conflict with any applicable negotiated labor agreement which was in effect before the date the rule or regulation was prescribed, an agency is bound by the language in the labor agreement. However, agreements are to be brought into conformance with the rule or regulation at the time the agreement is renewed, extended or

renegotiated. The FAA agreement with PASS is scheduled for renewal in August 1987 and we expect conformance at that time.

In the meanwhile, if we acknowledge that the main purpose of travel advances is to preclude the need to spend one's own money to carry out government business, an alternative to the advance now exists.

The government sponsored Diner's Club credit card is accepted in most areas and serves the same purpose but without the government advancing the loan. If anyone needing to travel has not requested this card, please do so and we will attempt to expedite its delivery. We are also attempting to have the card accepted in more areas within the state. If employees are aware of any hotels/motels or eating establishments that are considered appropriate for use by TDY travelers, that do not currently accept Diner's Club cards, please contact AAL-34 with the specific information. AAL-34 will assist in promoting acceptance of the Diner's Club card.

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If you have questions, suggestions, or complaints, please call the Editor at 271-5293.

Tax law changes

from: AAL-30

Due to changes in the income tax law, people who are claiming several exemptions may find their take-home pay goes up quite a bit. This is NOT a pay raise; it is NOT a windfall; it is NOT a bonus. Under the new law, each exemption is worth more, so you need to fill out the new W-4 form as soon as possible so you will not find at the end of the year that you owe a lot more tax than was withheld.

If, after refiguring your W-4, it looks like this will be devastating to you, Leo McGavick, AAL-34, will be glad to talk with you about it.

Check your pay slip

FAAers should check their pay slips carefully after the first of the year for changes resulting from the three percent pay raise and the Tax Reform Act of 1986.

The pay hike will show up in the checks that go out on January 27 and some employees may find it disappointing. For example, a GS-12/step 1 will earn only \$36 more per pay period before deductions. Other changes will reflect any increase in CFC contributions and implementation of the new, and generally higher, health insurance rates.

Pay slips for January 13 should have contained some different numbers due to the Tax Reform Act, and resumption of the FICA/Medicare payments for those who reached the 1986 cap earlier this year.

60 percent placed

The FAA has placed about 60 percent of the en route center employees impacted by the contracting out of the classroom training and automation support functions in those facilities. Most of the remainder have gone to work for the contractors. All employees were given the opportunity to be placed in other positions within FAA if they so desired.

Of the 536 affected employees, approximately 173 are undergoing recertification for controller positions, 118 have been reassigned to non-controller positions, 24 persons remained in managerial positions, one was promoted to area supervisor, and 219 either retired or resigned. The majority of those went back to their old jobs but working for contractors not FAA.

Ups and downs

Air traffic facilities have their ups and downs in more ways than one.

Since controller grades are based on a formula involving average operations in a specified period of time, FAA's Office of Personnel and Training (APT) notes that a significant change in a facility count can be either good news or bad news. For example, over the past five years, operational increases have resulted in the upgrading of about 1,000 controllers at approximately 24 enroute centers and airport towers.

On the other hand, reduced traffic levels at some 20 other facilities will result in the downgrading of close to 200 controllers. However, downgraded controllers are entitled to retain their grades and salary for two years during which time an increase in traffic could restore them to their old levels.

The winners are...

Winners of the weekly Civilair Club drawings for a free turkey during the holiday season were: Ruben Jackson, AAL-453; Pat Lehnerz, AAL-421; Jerry Stennette, ZAN-10; Robert Mitchell, AAL-1H; and Frank Berry, retiree (formerly AAL-451). Congratulations to each of you.

MTS has new #s

Effective January 1, 1987, the Management Training School (MTS) in Lawton, Oklahoma, has a new telephone number. The new FTS number will be 749-2738 (for FAA staff) or 749-4369 (for O.U. staff).

Medical notes - drug issue

by: Pat Sanders
AAL-300

The policy established by the Administrator's letter of August 14, 1985, states that no one known to use illegal drugs will be permitted to perform aviation safety related duties. He has directed the federal air surgeon to establish a program to include screening for substance abuse as a part of the medical examination for employees in certain safety related positions. The drug testing objectives are identification of a problem, appropriate intervention, and assistance.

Employees who will be tested are: flight inspection/test pilots, GS 2181; air traffic control specialists, 2152 (includes all developmental and operational controllers, first line supervisors and other GS 2152 personnel required to maintain operational currency; this also includes air traffic managers in facilities where there are no subordinated supervisors); aviation safety inspectors, GS 1825; federal air marshals, GS 1801; firefighters, GS 081; mobile lounge operators, WG 5701; police; applicants of above positions; and pilots who fly agency aircraft.

Substances that will be tested for are: alcohol, amphetamines, opiates, cannabinoids (marijuana/THC), cocaine, barbiturates, benzodiazepines, phencyclidine, methadone and methoqualone.

The laboratory tests CompuChem lab will be using are Screening by Enzyme Immunoassay (Emit) and confirmation by Gas Chromatography/mass spectrometry (GC/MS). The specimens will be collected by FAA physicians or aviation medical examiners. There will be no direct observation of the specimen collection during a routine

medical. The employee will be required to seal the collection container, initial the evidence tape, and sign a consent and chain of custody form.

The employee will be asked to provide a social security number to identify the specimen. If an employee refuses to provide a social security number, an identifying number will be assigned by the laboratory.

Tests showing levels below established cut off, regardless of amount, can not be a basis for taking action. There will be no such thing as "trace." Likewise, levels above cut off are not necessarily indicative of recency of usage or amount ingested.

Test results will be provided to the substance abuse control program coordinator/regional flight surgeon by CompuChem via computer or telephone and confirmed in writing. All positive results from initial screening will have been confirmed by the GC/MS testing.

Reports will not contain quantitative test values. They will be reported as "negative" or "positive" only. A negative report will be filed with the employee medical file. The employee is issued medical clearance if all other portions of the medical exam are satisfactory. The employee is provided a copy of test results.

In the case of a positive result CompuChem will notify the substance abuse control program specialist/regional flight surgeon, who notifies the division manager, who notifies the Employment Assistance Program and Security managers. The division manager also tells the facility manager, who in turn tells the supervisor, who in turn tells the employee.

(continued)

The employee is then removed from safety related duties. The employee is counseled by the EAP manager and offered rehabilitation. The EAP manager must keep the regional flight surgeon informed of rehabilitation efforts and of treatment progress, etc.

An employee may be returned to duty as soon as medical and security clearances are granted. The employee will be permitted to have a specimen retested by a second laboratory designated by the employee. A chain of custody between laboratories will be in effect. Only one retest will be permitted, and the specimen will not be released to the employee.

The employee will pay about \$20 for CompuChem costs for shipping and processing, and will pay costs incurred by the second lab. These costs will range from \$25 to \$100. The test results will be released directly to the employee.

The agency will not recommend a laboratory or require a copy of the results. If an employee refuses to provide a specimen, the aviation medical examiner notifies the regional flight surgeon's office. The regional flight surgeon advises the supervisor/manager that the employee refused to provide a specimen and the employee is not medically cleared. The employee will be subjected to disciplinary action for failure to meet medical standards. If the employee is unable to provide a specimen the physician will allow the employee an opportunity to drink liquids and wait in the office until specimen can be provided, about two hours.

Employees in a rehabilitation program will be randomly tested during rehabilitation and for a one year period following return to duty after rehabilitation. Prior to being returned to safety related duties, an

employee will be given a medical examination, regardless of when the medical would be due according to birth month.

A positive test, as part of the "return to work" medical exam, will be grounds for separation.

CompuChem can not discuss test results with employees or anyone other than those designated by the contracting officer. Those designated will include the regional flight surgeon, the regional substance abuse control program specialist, the national substance abuse control program manager, and the legal office (only when required to obtain case file documentation for litigation).

CompuChem can not provide information to the media regarding any individual test result, statistics, or other information about the FAA program. CompuChem and the computer reporting system will be secure, used to report individual test results, and provide statistical information. Auditing of collection sites will be done by the accounting firm of Coopers and Lybrand. As a sub contractor to CompuChem, Coopers and Lybrand will assure collection procedures are followed. The aviation medical examiners who do not follow procedures will no longer be designated to do FAA employee exams.





Robert E. "Spike" Arnold (left), manager, Nome SFO, presents general supply specialist Tess Staples with an Official Letter of Commendation.



Herb Shannon (left), acting manager, FSDO-61, presents Diana Hinshaw, aviation safety assistant, a Special Achievement Award.



Ivy Moore (right), public information specialist, AAL-5, receives a Letter of Commendation from Director Frank Cunningham for her "many efforts to promote aviation education in Alaska."



Mark J. Smith (left), air traffic control specialist, Juneau Tower, receives a Special Achievement Award from air traffic manager J. T. Stubbs.



Gulkana FSS held an open house on December 16 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of air traffic control. Here with the cake decorated by Carolyn Nelson are from left to right Jacqueline Phillips, Lee McCaw and James Allen.

"What we do with our leisure time is almost as essential to our success as what we do during our working hours."

Around the region

Congratulations to Debbie Gerlitz on receiving her private pilot license. Stan, Debbie's husband, is a controller at the Kodiak control tower. He was on duty as the local controller through the check ride and is also Debbie's flight instructor.

* * * * *

The following portion of a letter written on December 2, 1986, was from Daniel Housberg, who lives in Kotzebue, Alaska:

"In October I asked for a direction finding steer from the Kotzebue Flight Service Station. The assistance I received was excellent. I don't know who helped me, but he was very professional, courteous and most important, very helpful. In fact, whenever I require help from the FSS, be it weather briefings or other information, I get excellent service.

I believe the FAA's presence in Alaska is vital to safe and enjoyable flying. I hope the FSS's current operating level will remain as funding becomes harder to come by.

Thank you for your interest."

* * * * *

The Greatland Gold Health Club of Anchorage is offering a 50 percent savings on the initiation fee for all employees of FAA and the federal government (thanks to the Civilair Club). The initiation fee will be \$50 for singles; \$100 for couples; and \$150 for a family membership. Monthly dues are \$40 for singles; \$50 for couples; and \$60 for family. This offer is good starting December 10, 1986, and expiring February 10, 1987. For more information, please contact the club at 561-5535 and ask for Gene Spencer.

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Congratulations to Paul Steucke, public affairs officer, AAL-5, on receiving first place in the Alaska Chapter Public Relations Society of America's annual competitive public relations awards program for his work in responding to last year's OIG audit of regional enforcement actions. The judges' comments said, "The professional handling of this potentially explosive issue kept it from becoming a news disaster."

* * * * *

Congratulations to Bob Fenimore, air traffic control specialist, Cold Bay Flight Service Station, on his appointment as president of the local auto club. As of now, four of the five FSS personnel are involved in community affairs of one kind or another. Good work, folks.

* * * * *

Brenda Kinsey, daughter of Bob and Sandra Kinsey (King Salmon FSS), was recently selected as the overall winner in the Bristol Bay Health Corporation Substance Abuse Poster contest. She received a check for \$120 and the opportunity to compete at the statewide level. Congratulations, Brenda.

* * * * *

Editor's note: In case you wonder why this issue of Intercom looks a little different from previous issues, it is because I now have a Data General (DG) as opposed to a Wang. I must admit, I was not too happy about giving up my Wang, but the DG and I are getting along better each day. I still have lots to learn, but I am getting there. As the two of us become better acquainted, you will probably see more changes in style/format. Have a great day.

* * * * *

People and awards

** SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS **

Ron Glonek, received award while area supervisor at Sitka FSS; now air traffic manager at Northway FSS

Wally Bedford, air traffic control specialist (ATCS), Sitka FSS

Jeff Thompson, ATCS, Sitka FSS

** LETTERS OF COMMENDATION **

Corrine Boes, Don Neros, Wally Bedford and Jeff Thompson, ATCSs, Sitka FSS

** LETTERS OF APPRECIATION **

Henry Garbowski and Mickey Longoria, maintenance mechanics, Fairbanks Sector Field Office (SFO)

Al King, maintenance mechanic foreman, Fairbanks SFO

George Govan, maintenance mechanic, North Alaska AF Sector

Paul Wegrzyn, manager, AAL-52

John Young, general supply specialist, AAL-52

Anne Lewis, printing officer, AAL-52A

Rose Mower, graphics, AAL-52A

Art Lenseth, general supply specialist, AAL-52B

Mary Stearns, inventory management specialist, AAL-52B

Cheryl DeVries, contract specialist, AAL-55B

G. Laurine (Sis) Hill, manager, AAL-58

Marlys Bundtzen, secretary, AAL-58

Concetta Cron, realty specialist, AAL-58A

Phyllis Taylor, realty specialist, AAL-58B

Vicki Suboski, space management specialist, AAL-58B

** ON-THE-SPOT-AWARD **

Diana Hinshaw, aviation safety assistant, FSDO-61

** 40-YEAR SERVICE PIN **

John Hatcher, RADLO, Air Traffic Division

** 30-YEAR SERVICE PIN **

Blanche Walters, secretary, Nome SFO

Jack Walden, technical support staff, NA-Airway Facilities Sector

** 15-YEAR SERVICE PIN **

Tim Sierer, field maintenance support unit, NA SFO

** RETIREMENT **

William Dotson, woodcraftsman, South Alaska (SA) Sector

John Chambers, painter SA Sector

Frank Snodgrass, carpenter SA Sector

** TRANSFERS/PROMOTIONS **

Karen Trojano, new accounting technician, Accounts Control Branch

Liz Williamson, former BLMer, new division secretary, AAL-60

(continued)

** WEDDING **

Louise McVey, supply technician, Fairbanks SFO; and Robert Mackey, supervisor, Fairbanks ATCT, were married November 25, 1986

** DEATHS **

Julia Lord, former secretary, AAL-1, passed away December 16 in Brussels, Belgium, where she worked as a secretary for the office of AT; she had been with FAA since June 1962; services were held in Eagle River, Alaska, on December 20

Pauline Glover, wife of Fred Glover, FAA retiree in 1972, passed away in Soldotna, Alaska on January 12; Fred's address is 311 Redondt Avenue, Soldotna, Alaska 99669

FSSCOM

by: Robin Craviotto
Kenai FSS

The Flight Service Station Operations/Procedures Committee (FSSCOM) is a vital source of professional facility-level input into FSS procedures. It provides each specialist in flight service the opportunity for direct participation to improve operations. By submitting recommendations for procedural changes to your FSSCOM committee member, you begin to help make the changes necessary for the whole system. The committee schedules regional meetings yearly to formulate changes from the suggestions. They are then recommended to the regional or national level for action, depending on the area of concern.

The meeting in December acted on numerous suggestions, most of which were recommended for adoption. They

covered such things as updating the Alaska sections of the flight services handbook, changes in pilot reporting, broadcast formatting, flight plan notifications and pilot weather briefing.

The FSSCOM members in Alaska, and their representative stations are:

Robin Craviotto from Kenai FSS also represents Homer, Cordova and Yakutat; Greg Lehman from Fairbanks also represents Deadhorse, Barrow, Bettles and Tanana; Dan Hart from Ketchikan FSS also represents Sitka and Juneau; Julius Wery from Dillingham FSS also represents King Salmon, Iliamna and Cold Bay; and Mike Bavers from Anchorage also represents Gulkana, Northway, Talkeetna and Palmer.

Bethel, Nome, Kotzebue, McGrath and Farewell do not have a representative as of this time. If you want to participate as a member for a three year term, please contact Robin Craviotto at Kenai at 283-7212.

IRS tax tip

Married couples who both work are eligible for a special deduction of as much as \$3,000 on 1986 federal tax returns. This deduction may be claimed on either Form 1040A or Form 1040 as a subtraction from gross income, the IRS said.

The deduction is limited to 10 percent of the qualified earned income of the lesser-earning spouse. However, the maximum amount allowed is 10 percent of up to \$30,000 for a deduction of \$3,000. To take the deduction, both spouses must have earned income, such as wages, salaries and tips.

Retirement system

from: AAL-16

A frequently asked question is: How does undeposited service or withdrawn deposit affect my annuity?

NEW RETIREMENT SYSTEM - FERS:

Under the new Federal Employees' Retirement System any period of undeposited or withdrawn deposit time is not creditable toward eligibility to retire. The undeposited or withdrawn time is not used in the computation of your annuity, and employees can not redeposit or deposit for these periods.

UNDER THE OLD CIVIL SERVICE

RETIREMENT SYSTEM-CSRS: Under CSRS all periods of employment will be creditable for purposes of establishing eligibility to retire and for computing average salary, even if deposit/redeposit is not made. However, OPM will send annuitants who owe a redeposit or deposit (for service on or after October 1, 1982) an election letter by certified mail prior to final adjudication of their retirement claim. Those individuals who have undeposited service prior to October 1, 1982 will be sent an election letter only if they indicate a desire to pay the deposit, otherwise their annuity will be reduced by 10 percent of the amount due. Annuitants will be given 30 days to pay the deposit/redeposit. If the deposit is not paid within the 30 day period there will be no other opportunity to make the deposit/redeposit for this service.

INTERIM RATES UNDER CSRS: Effective January 1, 1985, the interest rate charged on deposits/redeposits for service performed on or after October 1, 1982 changed from 3 percent to the variable interest rate. Interest is computed at 4 percent to December 31, 1947, and at 3 percent to December 31, 1984, compounded annually. From December 31, 1984 through September

30, 1985 the interest rate was 13 percent. From October 1, 1985 through September 30, 1986, the interest rate was 11.125 percent. This interest rate is reset annually. After October 1, 1986, interest is charged from the date of withdrawal or non-deposit.

For more specific information or application to make a deposit/redeposit under CSRS, please contact Jean Pershall, employee relations specialist, AAL-16, 271-5804.

Another tax tip

Parents who pay someone to care for a child or dependent while they work or look for work may qualify for a special tax credit, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) says. This Child and Dependent Care Credit may be taken not only for payment to babysitters and day-care centers but also to certain relatives paid for this service.

This credit is available to married couples who both work part-time or full-time or are actively looking for work, and file jointly. If one spouse works full-time and the other works part-time, is a full-time student or is disabled, they are also eligible for the credit, according to the IRS.

The credit may also apply to a divorced or separated parent who has custody of a child who is under 15 or physically or mentally incapable of self-care, even though the parent may not be entitled to a dependency exemption for the child, according to the IRS. The parent claiming the credit must, however, have custody for a longer period during the year than the other parent. A married person living apart from his or her spouse is eligible for the credit when the spouse is absent for the last six months of the taxable year, and a separate return is filed.

News in brief

Airline traffic is growing, according to Air Transport Association figures, with a record 415 million passengers on U.S. carriers in 1986. That is up from 380 million in 1985, 344 million in 1984, and 275 million in 1978 when airline deregulation was approved. All together, U.S. airlines logged more than six million flights in 1986 accounting for approximately 370 billion passenger miles.

* * *

Administrator Donald Engen recently announced the appointments of five top-level managers, including two new Associate Administrators. They are: Edwin Harris, Associate Administrator for Development and Logistics; Keith Potts, Associate Administrator for Air Traffic; William Hendricks, moving from his post as Deputy Associate Administrator for Aviation Standards to replace Potts as the Safety Office Director; Leland Page, Director of the Advanced Automation Program Office; and Joan Bauerlein, Deputy Director of the Office of Budget.

* * *

Implementation of drug testing for employees in safety related positions and who are required to have an annual physical has been postponed until mid-February to make sure FAA's program conforms with the Office of Personnel Management guidelines. The testing was previously scheduled to begin in January.

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Employees hired since January 1, 1984, will be automatically transferred to the Federal Employees' Retirement System (FERS) in pay period two of 1987, beginning January 4. All retirement money previously withheld will be transferred to the employees' FERS accounts. The "DOT RET. BALANCE" block on the January 27

Earnings and Leave Statement will reflect the transfer and future FERS withholdings. FERS withholding rates will remain at 1.3 percent.

* * *

Good news! Administrator Donald Engen is lifting all restrictions on FAA awards for periods of performance ending on or after January 1, 1987. Established in March 1986 because of budgetary restraints, the restrictions cut all award payouts by approximately 50 percent. Virtually all employee groups were affected by the action which reduced SES bonuses, PMRS performance awards, quality within-grade increases, special act or service awards, and sustained superior performance awards.

* * *

Traffic up and profits down pretty much summarizes the performance of the U.S. airline industry in Fiscal Year 1986. FAA's just published "Quarterly Industry Overview for FY 1986" notes that revenue passenger miles increased 8.9 percent over the FY 1985 figure but operating profits tumbled from \$1.8 billion to \$289 million during the same period. Higher operating costs (despite a 21 percent drop in jet fuel prices) and fare wars were cited as the principal reasons for the overall decline in airline yields. The report also lists seven mergers among major airlines during FY 86 and 10 buyouts of commuters by major airlines. Another 17 carriers went out of business due to bankruptcies or other reasons. Call 267-3355 for copies.

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One of the major reasons flight delays increased in 1986 was the unusually large number of severe weather incidents. 364 severe weather watches were reported in the first 11 months of the year.



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Aviation Administration

POLICY STATEMENT on Aviation Education

FAA's mission depends upon well-qualified, highly-motivated, and dedicated employees. The Nation's ability to provide for the safe and efficient use of the Nation's airspace, facilities, and the vehicles that travel therein depends upon the quality of our employees' education and the educational foundation for the skills required to advance aviation technology.

It shall be the policy of the FAA to support aviation education at all levels of our Nation's school system. Students should be exposed to ways aviation can contribute to their personal development so that we can cultivate the talent needed to sustain aviation in the future.

As Administrator, I encourage FAA employees to initiate and actively participate in "Partnerships-in-Education" among business, educational institutions, and Government. We have a continuing part to play in nurturing the future of aviation. **We need to make the young people more aware of how aviation has enriched our lives and the lives of others in society and to enlarge their vision about the opportunities for aviation tomorrow.**

Active support of the FAA's Aviation Education Program will help to achieve our mission objective and sustain America's leadership in the world aviation community. **In short, we will continue to build safety in the skies through aviation education.**

Donald D. Engen, Administrator
Federal Aviation Administration

October 20, 1986