TALKING POINTS
FOR
DAVID R. HINSON
ADMINISTRATOR, FEDERAL AVIATION ADMINISTRATION
HISPANIC ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES
AUGUST 8, 1994

I'm very glad to have this chance to meet with you before you leave Washington and return to your colleges and universities.

The FAA is very serious about expanding our ties with colleges and universities around the country.

The intern program is one of the most direct and personal ways for us to get acquainted.

During your stay with us this summer, I hope that you had some contact with the older generation of FAA professionals -- the ones who built the system as it exists today -- a generation whose achievement is recognized throughout the world.

For they are unsurpassed in their success in operating a safe and efficient air traffic system, around the clock and across a continent.

But I also hope that you had a chance to meet the younger generation of FAA managers -- the ones who are leading the FAA into new fields.

Areas such as environmental protection, satellite communications, mathematical modeling and artificial intelligence.

This is our future.

And if the FAA tomorrow is to maintain the same high level of excellence it has today, we will have to look to our colleges and universities for a steady source of new ideas and skilled technical talent.

And we have to look in all directions.

We don't know where the best ideas and the best people will come from.

So it makes sense for us to diversify.

That's the reason the FAA is actively promoting programs of cooperation with colleges and universities which educate large numbers of students from the Hispanic, Asian, Black, and Native American communities of our country.

We want these programs to be a success.

And to make it a success, it's important now that we don't lose touch with you.

I hope that some of you already have your eye on a job which you'd like to have at the FAA. Study hard. With any luck at all, we may just see you back here, once you graduate.

I wish you well during the coming term, and hope to see you all again.

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AIR LINE PILOTS ASSOCIATION
1994 AIR SAFETY FORUM AWARDS BANQUET
AUGUST 16, 1994
HYATT REGENCY, WASHINGTON, DC

Thank you, Randy (Babbitt).

It's a special privilege for me to take part in this program honoring the seven men who received awards this evening.

All of us at the FAA share a bond with every ALPA member. That bond is our single-minded commitment to aviation safety. We both see as our primary duty, the maintenance of uncompromised standards of air safety.

So I am proud to join ALPA in recognizing these pilots for their unwavering professionalism -- for their steady hands and sure judgement -- even in the face of great peril.

They are proof that however sophisticated and reliable our technology, it is human skill, intelligence and courage which -- in the end -- count the most.

We have that in abundance here in this room.

Getting together with friends and associates on occasions like this always reminds me that many of the issues I have to deal with at the FAA are -- more often than not -- the same ones which concern you.

We all agree that it is not enough to simply protect the gains we've made in safety. We've got to build on our success and extend our record of achievement.

The study we just completed on wake turbulence is a case in point. I'm going to see to it that we find a more effective means for addressing emerging safety issues. And I'm taking steps to see that we get information out to you in a far more timely fashion.

Whenever and where-ever I can, I'm going to speed up the installation of terminal Doppler radar. And continue to improve TCAS to make it even better still.

Over the years, ALPA and the FAA have collaborated to solve the most critical issues confronting aviation safety. But none has been more compelling than airborne collision avoidance.

ALPA's pilots were among the first proponents of TCAS. From the earliest trials and throughout its operation, you have been a leading voice in support of this new capability. I thank you for that. And I ask for your help as we continue to upgrade and improve this system.

We all agree that the FAA needs to get on with the modernization of the system. So we're stepping up our efforts to get early benefits from new technologies like GPS, automation, and datalink.

We may occasionally differ in approach and emphasis on certain programs. But much of the agenda for American aviation is a common agenda -- for both government and business.

Near the top of the national agenda the past few years has been the necessity to cut costs. And now the U.S. economy is beginning to reap the benefits.

American business has regained much of its competitive advantage in world markets.

And our federal government, under President Clinton, has already done what the governments of Europe are just getting around to doing: massive reductions in public expenditures and a really significant downsizing of the government workforce.

At the FAA, we will trim about 65 hundred jobs in the next five or six years. This scale-back will, in no way, impair aviation safety. It just means that we've got to become as lean and efficient as some of the best run airline companies have become.

Our nation's air carriers are beginning to find new formulas for profitability. They've discovered that it's possible to make money even with permanently low air fares.

They've come to accept the fact that to survive, they've got to think more like Wal-Mart and less like Neiman Marcus.

Every member of ALPA knows, first hand, that cutting labor costs is central to this new way of doing business. And one cost category which continues to be a heavy burden is the price tag of health care.

After years of dodging this politically painful issue, we are at last trying to reform a system that costs far too much and neglects far too many.

The success of health care reform will do a lot more to reduce costs in the airline industry than cutting out the peanuts.

Here again, President Clinton has taken a big risk in trying to shake up a system grown greedy and inefficient. As a nation, we are going to take a giant step backwards if entrenched special interests are allowed to defeat health care reform.

We should all be out on the front lines of this fight. Because the stakes are too high for any of us to be passive bystanders.

ALPA has proven itself to be a vigorous advocate on many of the issues which concern its members.

Many of these are issues which I faced when I first sat down at my desk at the FAA a year ago.

And even matters which are internal to the FAA often have indirect but important implications for you at ALPA.

So I'd like to take a few minutes to highlight some of what I encountered in the past year and to share my thoughts on what I believe is the single biggest problem facing aviation in the coming century.

That problem is how to add capacity safely. In the airspace and at our airports.

When I came to the Agency last August, the airlines were still desperately trying to regain some financial stability after suffering catastrophic losses.

The President's National Airline Commission surveyed the state of the industry and recognized that profitability depended on growth. And that growth required an air traffic control system capable of handling an ever expanding volume of business.

One recommendation was the creation of an air traffic services corporation outside the FAA.

The Commission correctly diagnosed the problem.

The FAA -- as it operates today -- is as frustrated as it is frustrating.

Because it is part of the federal bureaucracy it has to follow rigid purchasing procedures -- rules which had their origins way back in the days when the U.S. Cavalry worried about getting cheated by horse traders.

But safeguards which may make sense when buying basic supplies are illogical and counter-productive when buying advanced technology -- technology which keeps evolving even while we're doing all the paper work.

The FAA's career professionals have long been frustrated by this ponderous and out-moded system.

And FAA Administrators find it frustrating to try to make much of a difference.

On average, FAA Administrators are in their jobs about 18 months. Most of us barely have time to learn who's who on our speed call buttons before another change-over begins.

What this means is that there is a critical shortage of continuity at the top.

It takes time to develop long-term strategies and carry them through to completion.

Realistically, about all anyone can do in two years or less is patch up the problems we've inherited and fill in the cracks when other people's plans begin to fall apart.

The FAA needs long-haul piloting. But it's been getting short-hop management.

The President's proposal to set up an air traffic services corporation will go a long way to correct these deficiencies.

An independent board of directors will provide the essential continuity and a stable sense of direction.

A steady flow of income will reduce the unpredictability of funding.

And its freedom to manage itself like any well-run business will eliminate much of the erratic decision making and constant second-guessing which we've seen too often in the past.

The corporate proposal is a common sense solution to a situation which has been very costly and confusing for us all.

No where is this more evident than in our current effort to upgrade and modernize the air traffic control system.

The Advanced Automation System, for example, suffered from a history of cost overruns and delays ever since it started in the early 1980s.

Shortly after I arrived, I ordered a review of the costs and schedule to bring this program in line.

What I learned led me to cancel or modify major portions of the program -- scaling it back to the essentials and putting it on a solid, business-like footing.

The program is now under new management.

I also brought in a top level official from Rand Corporation to revamp the FAA's internal processes for managing acquisitions, systems development, and new technology.

I'm determined that the FAA live up to the expectations we've created for a modernized air traffic control system.

And I want to deliver on those promises within a reasonable time and at an affordable price.

Stringing out programs and postponing decisions just adds to the cost.

A few weeks ago I cancelled the Microwave Landing System Program.

The decision to develop MLS may have made good sense 20 years ago. But it can't be justified any longer. Not now when there is every reason to believe that the Global Positioning System can do all that we expected of MLS ... and a great deal more.

You can scan the far horizon for future technologies and find none that offers greater promise for civil aviation than does satellite navigation.

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Last September, we certified the first GPS receivers. Now there are nine companies competing for a share of the market.

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We're also looking to see if we can tie GPS into the airport radar. If it works, and I believe it will, we can move planes faster and with a greater margin of safety from the runway to the gate.

I envision a time, in the not too distant future-

... where precision landing approaches are possible on virtually every runway in the world-- without the need for expensive ground based systems.

...where flights can be re-routed instantly to by-pass weather, or to follow more direct routes with less separation.

...and where the airspace over the oceans is as well managed and efficient as that over land.

Satellites, digital data link communications, and automation. These three new technologies are changing the way we traditionally think of air traffic management.

Shifting us away from the purely ground based perspective that we've had for the past 60 years -- to one which places increased emphasis and reliance on airborne participation and decision-making.

Much of the FAA's $32 billion dollar modernization program focuses on these three technologies.

But as vital as these programs are -- now, more than ever before -- a fully modern air traffic control system depends on fully modern airports.

In the last four decades of this century, air travel in the United States has increased ten-fold -- from 50 million passengers in 1960 to 500 million today.

Yet during this same period, very few new airports were built.

You can count them all on the fingers of one hand. There were only three.

Dulles in 1962. DFW in 1974. And, this year, Denver International.

Across the country, there are about 700 airports that offer commercial service. But the top 50 airports handle more than 80 percent of all passenger traffic.

These are busy airports. Many of them are the busiest in the world, in fact.

Yet only 15 are now able to handle simultaneous parallel instrument approaches. This capacity to manage two independent arrival streams can increase the number of operations per hour from about 29 to 57.

With new technology like the Precision Runway Monitor and the Final Monitor Aid, we may be able to add this capability to another 21 airports.

With triple parallel approaches in IFR weather, arrival capacity is increased by 50 percent.

And with quadruple parallel approaches, there's an increase of a hundred percent over the capacity of airports geared for just dual runway operations.

But so far, DFW is the only airport in the world equipped to handle four simultaneous approaches. Denver will be able to handle three.

I stress this fact because it shows that there is still a way to go in increasing airport capacity -- either with existing technology or with technology soon to become available.

And there still remains a lot that we can do to build larger terminals, add runways, expand taxiways and aprons.

We have the know-how and the resources to squeeze out every ounce of capacity in the air traffic control system.

But sooner or later, we will be caught in a capacity crunch.

Sooner or later, we'll have no more tricks to try ... no more ingenious solutions.

Then we'll have to find the room ... and we'll have to find the will ... to further expand our airport infrastructure.

Washington, Dallas, Fort Worth and Denver may be able to relax for a while. But the rest of the nation needs to foresee the inevitable economic consequences of airports incapable of further growth.

Shortly after the turn of the century, our air traffic control system, our airlines, and our airports will have to accommodate an additional 300 million passengers a year. For every ten passengers who fly today, we'll have to find space for six more.

By the year 2020, we expect the number of passenger enplanements to double what it is today.

We know that it takes years of planning and negotiation to construct a new runway -- much less a new airport.

Given that time scale. And given the prospects for economic and population growth, many of our urban regions may hit the wall of "maxed out" airport capacity long before they can build new infrastructure.

Here is another case -- similar to our experience with MLS -- where stringing out the process and postponing painful decisions will only make it more costly and more difficult to act ... when act we finally must.

At this moment in the history of American commercial aviation, when members of ALPA are assuming more direct responsibility for the management of some of our major carriers ... now is the moment when ALPA should also take a leadership role in pushing for greater airport capacity.

It's one of the best ways I know to protect your investment ... to safeguard your personal financial stakes in the continued prosperity of our industry.

I'd like to close this evening by once again congratulating the seven men receiving the ALPA awards. There is no better measure of our worth than the judgement of our peers.

To be chosen to receive one of the Safety Forum awards is a very high honor in a profession where excellence is commonplace and vigilance a byword.

It has been a pleasure to be here. I thank you for inviting me.

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GRAND FORKS, ND
AUTOMATED FLIGHT SERVICE STATION
FY 1993 Quality Improvement Award
Saturday, August 20, 1994; 10:45 a.m.

- Significant Achievement: displaying best of FAA values, management and teamwork. Example for other FAA organizations.

- Modeled after the Malcolm Baldridge award given annually by industry. In government, this Administration has paid particular attention to quality. This award is consistent with the Vice-President's National Performance Plan which emphasizes providing quality service to our customers.

- Second time that Grand Forks, ND, AFSS has won the FAA's Quality Award -- they also won in FY 1989.

- The 1993 Quality Improvement Award is being awarded to the Grand Forks AFSS for their overall efforts to bring the highest possible quality services to our customers. To achieve this, they made commendable strides in bringing management and union together to resolve issues. They also identified customers' needs and used customer feedback to continually improve the process.

- The AFSS award submission was reviewed by a panel of quality management experts from five FAA organizations. Their evaluation indicated that the Grand Forks AFSS scored well in all criteria categories, especially in the Customer Focus and Results of Quality Improvement Efforts categories.
  - Specific accomplishments:
    - participation in 36 customer outreach activities which reached approximately 99 percent of all registered pilots in North Dakota
    - increased pilot calls answered in 20 seconds or less to 96 percent
    - reduced pilots' maximum call waiting time by 28 percent.

- Such improvements are not easy to achieve. They require a commitment from management and the sustained dedication of the entire team.

- Forty-nine people receiving the award. Already provide fine level of service. Analyzed how to improve and then implemented their plan. This kind of commitment is what the FAA is all about. Their hard work and demonstrated results are our goal throughout the agency. Have noted that in some areas, employees want to do the best possible job, but find there are bureaucratic obstacles. The proposed U.S. Air Traffic Services Corp. will create an environment which facilitates and rewards efforts such as these.

- Accomplishments are so outstanding that the Grand Forks AFSS has been nominated for the Secretary of Transportation's Annual Quality Award.