



*Delta Air Lines and Northwest Airlines announced plans to merge in 2008 to form the world's largest airline. Elections to determine union representation will require high levels of employee participation to be considered "valid."*

merged. Those elections will have enormous consequences.

NWA workers are currently protected by mature contracts with hard-won language that stretches back more than 60 years.

If an election for a classification fails to meet the NMB threshold requirements, those workers would lose their union representation. Their contract would be dissolved, eliminating all established protections, including seniority, bidding and due process rights. And, participation in the IAM National Pension Plan would end.

In determining the threshold number of employees for union representation, the NMB counts people who choose not to cast a ballot, or simply forget to do so, as casting a "no" vote. Either you vote "no" by inaction or you vote "yes" by actively voting. NMB elections are typically conducted through the Internet and by telephone.

The NMB will determine which airline employees belong in which classifications, and each classification will vote in a separate elec-

## Airline Merger Plan Puts Workers at Risk

**I**f federal elections had to follow the same rules as labor elections in the airline and rail industry, there would be a lot fewer politicians today. Voter turnout in the United States is regularly below 50 percent, and the 60 percent turnout for Barack Obama was heralded as historic.

But if you are in the airline or rail industry, voter turnout for a union represen-

tation election must surpass 50 percent for the National Mediation Board to consider the election "valid."

If less than half of eligible employees vote in an NMB election, including those on furlough or approved leave, no representative will be certified.

Those extraordinary NMB rules will apply to union representation elections among employee groups at Delta and Northwest Airlines (NWA) once they are fully

AP/Wide World Photo

# One Railroad, Four Organizing Victories

The IAM Transportation Department closed out 2008 by adding 40 new members with successful organizing campaigns for Maintenance of Way, Shop Mechanic, Office & Clerical and Operating Employees (engineers and conductors) at the South Central Florida Express railroad.

Organizing employees under the Railway Labor Act requires separate elections for each class and craft. The IAM won all four elections in late December. The new IAM members at South Central Florida Express are part of the Transportation

Department's Railroad District 19.

Owned and operated by U.S. Sugar Corp., the South Central Florida Express is the largest private agricultural railroad in the country. U.S. Sugar is the only sugar company in the continental U.S. that transports all its cane by railroad to its mills.

"These victories were the result of coordinated efforts between organizers from District 19, the IAM Southern Territory and a



*After a successful organizing effort, new IAM members in four crafts at the South Central Florida Railroad are now part of IAM District Lodge 19.*

dedicated in-house organizing team," said Transportation GVP Robert Roach, Jr. "This railroad is growing, and these victories ensure good-paying IAM jobs will grow with it."

tion. Each individual classification must meet the NMB threshold requirements for their election to secure union representation.

An election that achieves the NMB threshold and certifies the IAM as the bargaining agent for a particular classification would allow both Delta and Northwest workers to propose and negotiate a new agreement covering employee groups from both airlines.

For the first time, rank and file Delta workers will be able

to sit across the bargaining table with the legal right to negotiate as equals with Delta management.

"Despite the challenges of an NMB election, we need to focus on making sure employ-

ees at both carriers understand the critical importance of casting their ballots when the time comes," said Transportation GVP Robert Roach, Jr. "Nothing less than their entire careers are at stake."

*Local 1759 Committee Chairman Rick Iacino, center, speaks with NWA Equipment Service Employees Keith Sims, left, and Earl Day, right, about protecting their contract in union elections for NWA and Delta employees.*

