

Transportation

Three IAM-represented Flight Attendants on board Continental Flight 1404 successfully evacuated 110 passengers after the aircraft broke apart and burned during an aborted takeoff at Denver International Airport.



Flight Attendant Heroes Honored

It is the stuff of nightmares; being strapped inside a plane during takeoff when it suddenly veers off the runway and bursts into flames. That nightmare became a reality for the 115 passengers and crew of Continental Flight 1404 at Denver International Airport on December 20, 2008. But thanks to the heroism and professionalism of the three IAM

Flight Attendants on board, everyone survived.

According to Continental pilot Richard Lowe, who was off duty and traveling as a passenger, the scene inside the plane after it came to a halt was at first pure chaos. "Five people were trying to get out for every one that got out. No one wanted to be second," said Lowe.

"Windows were melting and popping. Passengers were screaming, 'we're gonna burn' and 'it's gonna explode.' There was a male passenger who ran over a woman who had kids in her arms. Frantic was not the word for it."

In spite of the harrowing conditions, the Flight

Attendants took control and evacuated the burning aircraft in 90 seconds.

The IAM honored the three Local 2339H Flight Attendants, Pamela Howard, Regina Ressler and Al Felipe, for their heroism at the 2009 IAM Transportation Conference in New York City. The Transportation Department's Joint Air Transport Safety Committee presented them with the first IAM Excellence in Safety Award. FAA administrator Randy Babbitt participated in the presentation ceremony (honoree Al Felipe was unable to attend).

"These members ignored their own injuries and the threat to their lives to ensure every passenger was safely evacuated from the burning wreckage," said IAM Transportation General Vice President Robert Roach, Jr. "Their actions go beyond simple training and speak to the character of these heroes."



Local 2339H Flight Attendants Regina Ressler, left, Pamela Howard, and Al Felipe (not in photo) received the IAM Excellence in Safety Award for their heroism on Continental Flight 1404.

Members Rally for Jobs and Justice

Hundreds of IAM members marched on Times Square in New York City during the 2009 Transportation "Day of Action" rally to support Delta Air Lines workers' right to organize and to urge government investment in high-speed rail.

"We call on Delta Air Lines to let their employees make up their own minds about union representation without intimidation, threats and lies," said IAM Transportation General Vice President Robert Roach, Jr.

The march and rally were part of the five-day Conference, which included visits from New Jersey Democratic Governor Jon S. Corzine, Federal Aviation Administrator Randy Babbitt and Federal Railroad Administrator Joseph Szabo.

Speakers at the Conference also focused on proposed funding for massive infrastructure projects.

"When it comes to passenger rail, the United States lags far behind the rest of the industrialized world," said Roach. "U.S. workers should build the parts, assemble the trains

and maintain all elements of a new high-speed rail system. If American taxpayers are funding the project, their investment should be spent putting Americans to work."



The IAM Transportation Department's 2009 Day of Action filled the intersection of 7th Ave. and 42nd St. in New York City, with calls for a fair election at Delta Air Lines, where 30,000 airline workers are fighting to unionize, and more investment in high-speed rail.

'Majority Rules' Considered for Air, Rail Elections

In what would be a dramatic change to the rules governing union elections for airline and railroad employees, the National Mediation Board (NMB) is weighing a request from the Transportation Department of the AFL-CIO to allow representational elections to be decided by a majority of

workers who cast ballots.

The NMB's current system is deeply flawed. Even if 100 percent of the votes cast are in favor of union representation, the union will lose unless more than half of the eligible voters actually vote.

Under these rules, any employee who does not cast a

ballot is counted as a "no" vote. The rules for transportation workers are unlike the rules for employees covered by the National Labor Relations Act, which determines the outcome of elections the same way U.S. citizens elect their leaders — whoever gets the most votes wins.