

THE GRAPEVINE

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AIRCRAFT MECHANICS FRATERNAL ASSOCIATION

JAN 2025

Happy New Year

By Rui Leonardo, National Secretary/Treasurer

I hope 2024 wrapped up wonderfully for everyone and that you all enjoyed a peaceful and joyous holiday season. As we step into 2025, let's look forward to a year filled with happiness and prosperity.

This edition of The Grapevine is packed with insightful articles that I'm sure you'll enjoy. Bret Oestreich kicks things off with an informative piece exploring the advantages of a craft union over an industrial union. Nic Kula follows with a compelling article on the importance and responsibilities of our craft.

Be sure to take a moment to read Cameron Lampley's reflections on the AEI conference he attended this year, highlighting the shared challenges faced by AMTs and AMEs worldwide. Tom Wiggins offers a thoughtful end-of-year discussion on maintaining safety and standards, while Rob Cush closes out this issue with an essential reminder: AMFA remains the only trade union representing AMTs/AMEs in government.

Happy reading!

2025

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

The Power of Craft/Trade Unionism: Elevating Aviation Maintenance Professionals

By Bret Oestreich, National President

Craft/trade unionism is built on a foundation of shared values and purpose. Within the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA), this principle shines brightly as members come together with a common professional culture, skillset, and vision for the future. AMFA stands as a community bound by a collective history, responsibility, and a commitment to advancing the craft of aviation maintenance.

The Essence of Solidarity

Through the exchange of personal narratives and experiences, AMFA fosters a profound sense of unity among its members. This solidarity empowers aviation maintenance professionals (AMEs and AMTs) to advocate for higher industry standards and recognition. By amplifying their collective voice, AMFA demonstrates the transformative potential of unity in addressing deeply rooted challenges within the aviation industry. Together, members of AMFA push for social and industry change, championing the recognition of skilled aircraft maintenance professionals on a global scale.

A Focused Mission: Craft/Trade Unions vs. Industrial Unions

Craft/trade unions, like AMFA, challenge the traditional “catch-all” model of industrial unions by prioritizing a focused and specialized approach. Unlike industrial unions, whose broad objectives often dilute the specific needs of distinct trades, craft/trade unions are dedicated to elevating and fully monetizing the value of their members’ specialized skillsets.



AMFA National President Bret Oestreich and National Safety and Standards Director Tom Wiggins manning the AME skills competition booth in Toronto

AMFA’s mission is clear: to highlight the relevance, importance, and unmatched expertise of aviation maintenance professionals. By doing so, the association ensures that its members are valued not just for their labor but for the critical role they play in aviation operations and safety.

The Decline of Industrial Unionism

As workers increasingly recognize the limitations of industrial unions, the demand for craft-specific unions continues to grow. Industrial unions have often placed organizational interests above the professionals they represent, leading to suppressed wages and diminished advocacy for specialized trades.

In contrast, AMFA dedicates 100% of its dues and resources to advancing the craft and careers of Aircraft Technicians, Aircraft Engineers, and Related Professionals. This singular focus ensures that members benefit directly from the union’s efforts, fostering tangible results and real progress.

A Future Built on Unity

The strength of craft/trade unions lies in their ability to unify members around a shared vision and purpose. AMFA exemplifies this unity, driving unprecedented change and recognition for aviation maintenance professionals. In an industry marked by challenges such as mergers, bankruptcies, wage suppression, and labor shortages, AMFA’s focused advocacy offers a path to progress.

Unity transforms potential into reality. By standing together, skilled aviation professionals can overcome obstacles, achieve greater recognition, and unlock their full potential. AMFA is not just a union; it is a movement for meaningful transformation and progress, proving that when united by a shared goal, extraordinary feats are within reach.

In unity, we find strength. In solidarity, we create change. Together, we are shaping the future of aviation maintenance professionals worldwide.

AEI Sydney Congress Update to AMFA



By Cameron Lampley,
Secretary of the Americas

As many of you may already know, AMFA has international affiliation with other craft-specific Aircraft Maintenance unions around the world through Aircraft Engineers International – AEI. Through this partnership, AMFA and AEI work together to protect the class and craft of aircraft mechanics through government affairs by advocating for or against policies, staying updated on industry changes, utilizing legal protections against employer interference to safeguard the union's bargaining power and member rights, and maintaining strong member engagement throughout the affiliated unions.

As Secretary of the Americas, I was given the opportunity to attend the 2024 AEI congress in Sydney, Australia in October 2024. At this annual congress, affiliates share with the AEI executive board the struggles faced in the past months and prospective struggles on the horizon, as well as victories achieved in the past year. In

the weeks leading up to the congress, I was able to work closely with Rob Cush, the AMFA government affairs representative, to compose an update for AEI on AMFA's victories over the past year, and the battle plan for any future government policies that could affect our craft. With international affiliates always interested in American politics and regulation, the feedback and participation during and after my AMFA update was positive.

During the three days of meetings, there was discussion on strategies to increase interest in our craft to the younger generation currently in higher education or those about to start it, discussion on safety pitfalls and implementation of safety reporting avenues for regions of the world that lack systems like ASAP and the FAA hotline, and discussion on employer pitfalls such as implementing electronic logbooks and paperwork that lacks in usability for the mechanics resulting in delays and or safety concerns.

AEI was also honored to have special guests from Aerospace Maintenance Council Honorable John Goglia (President AMC) and Ken MacTiernan (VP AMC). John and Ken spoke on the strategies of getting more people involved in aircraft maintenance through programs like the Aircraft Maintenance Competitions. Currently the AMC is only conducted in the United States but hopes to expand the competitions to an international scale with the help of AEI. AEI was humbled to have Ola Blomqvist (President AEI) offered a chair on the board of the Aerospace Maintenance Council.

Finally, with the increasing participation and interest in AEI from all seven continents, AEI was able to fill every board position within the organization. With communication being one of the most important roles of any organization, I was most excited to see the role of PR Chairman filled at this congress. This role is important to keep all the affiliated unions updated on AEI progress and the flying public aware of who we are and the struggles our craft faces.

I would like to thank AMFA and its members for the support and information needed to conduct the business that furthers our craft. It truly amazes me to be part of a union like AMFA who works tirelessly for its members' protection and future. I look forward to attending the next annual congress in Portugal 2025.

2025

AMFA SCHOLARSHIP

INSTRUCTIONS

The AMFA National Executive Council (NEC) is pleased to announce that we are currently accepting applications for three (3) AMFA Scholarships for 2025. Scholarships will be \$2000, payable to each recipient's institution of higher learning. Those interested in the scholarship must follow the process listed below to be considered.

☑ QUALIFICATIONS

- Applicant must be enrolled as a student in an A&P school, university, or a Transport Canada-approved college attempting to obtain their A&P/AME license
- Applicant must be a United States or Canadian citizen

☑ APPLICATION PROCESS

- Applications may be found on the Workforce Development and Education page of the AMFA National Website at www.amfanational.org
- Completed applications must be submitted to AMFA National via email to finance@amfanatl.org or fax to 303-362-7736, including:

1. Application Form
2. Transcripts proving current enrollment and grades
3. Applications are due no later than February 28, 2025
4. If there are any questions, please contact the National Secretary/Treasurer at rui.leonardo@amfanatl.org or 720-744-6632

☑ SELECTION PROCESS

The Selection Committee, comprised of National Officers, will review applications for qualifications, and the winners will be randomly selected from the qualified applicants. Once a recipient is selected and notified, the scholarship will be awarded and paid directly to their institute of higher learning.

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATIONS TO AMFA NO LATER THAN



02-28-2025

Be sure to include the following:

1. Application Form (if you need additional space, please attach a separate sheet)
2. Transcripts proving current enrollment and grades.

AIRCRAFT MECHANICS FRATERNAL ASSOCIATION



www.amfanational.org



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The Responsibilities of Our Craft



Port Hueneme, Calif., memorial honoring the 88 lives that were tragically lost when Alaska Airlines Flight 261 crashed.

By Nic Kula, Local 14 President

It has been nine years since I began at working as an AMT. In that time, the gravity of our work has never hit me harder than when I spoke on behalf of AMFA in front of the surviving families of Alaska Airlines Flight 261. The accident occurred nearly 25 years ago on January 31, 2000, yet to the families of the 88 people killed onboard who were willing to attend the memorial event hosted by Alaska, it was like it happened yesterday. Their somber eyes communicated far more than they were willing or able to vocalize.

We have a job that is unlike any other. In the same day, we can be expected to be plumbers, electricians, heavy machinery operators, engine overhaul-

ers, manual sleuths and paperwork perfectionists. However, our work is unseen and out of mind for the flying public we serve. We are the first and last lines of defense when it comes to safety, and we are bound by not only moral but also legal obligations of the perfect execution of our craft.

I recall during initial training feeling the immense gravity Flight 261 had on the workforce. We were shown a video of the accident in class, and the trainers who showed me the ropes mentioned how dramatically it impacted their lives. The weight of the incident has not left those that experienced it firsthand, and the influence of the tragedy continues to be passed on generationally from technicians to incoming trainees to this day.

It provides a solemn reminder that you have the power to stop the operation. You are the keystone holding up the trusses of safety. Without your steadfast focus on defending safety in every regard, an airplane is worth nothing.

With the 25th anniversary of the 261 tragedy fast approaching, take a moment to recognize yourself. Remember that everyday, the passengers who may not see you, and will likely never acknowledge every control cable adjusted, brake changed, thrust reverser troubleshoot and fault documented still trusts you when they fly.

Our real job is to make certain that trust remains unbroken.

Safety and Standards 2024 Year in Review

By Tom Wiggins, National Safety & Standards Director

This year, AMFA established regularly scheduled Aviation Safety Action Program (ASAP) and safety meetings. These meetings have provided a platform for discussing safety issues across airlines, fostering collaboration, and sharing strategies to help each other meet safety goals.

Consistent focus on safety improvements and compliance has been a cornerstone of these meetings. With the assistance of Local Safety Standards Committees (LSSCs) and Professional Standards Chairs at each

airline, we have thoroughly revised the safety and standards handbook. These revisions reflect current best practices, enhanced clarity and applicability for all aviation professionals.

We have also revised the Accident Investigation Procedures and Communication Manual. Using input from LSSCs and Accident Investigation Team (AIT) Primary Coordinators, the manual now includes improved procedures aimed at streamlining accident investigations. The revisions also enhance communication protocols, ensuring better coordination and transparency during investigations.

Training and Conferences

Held in Oklahoma City at the Transportation Safety Institute (TSI) and conducted by the Department of Transportation (DOT), Accident Investigator Team (AIT) Training was held in June. The training provided comprehensive education to enhance the skills and methodologies of AIT members.

Over the past year, I have learned and grown significantly, but these achievements are not mine alone. These accomplishments are a testament to the hard work and dedication of the LSSCs, Safety Coordinators, Pro Standards Chairs, and AIT Members.

MemberLink Puts Members in Charge

AMFA is proud to introduce a new software platform for members — MemberLink. This online portal allows members to view their AMFA record, update contact information (phone, email, address), and US-based members can make dues payments there. As a bonus, on this platform, members will not incur a credit card processing fee when paying dues! It's a win-win.

With monthly dues payments coming due soon, there is no better time than now to register with MemberLink and maintain your Member in Good Standing (MIGS) status. The whole process takes less than 5 minutes to set up.

Steps to Register:

- Scan the QR Code or visit: <https://members.amfanational.org/> and select "Sign Up Now"
- Enter your information and select "Register"

Spirit and Sun Country Members — Steps to Pay Membership Dues:

- Login at: <https://members.amfanational.org/>
- Select My Payments >> Make a Payment
- Select "Schedule ongoing payments for a specific amount"
- Enter your Base Rate and the dues rate will be auto-calculated
- The system sets the payment frequency to monthly, and the start date of the 10th of next month.



National President Bret Oestreich and Director of Government Affairs Rob Cush attending Congressional meetings on the FAA Reauthorization bill in Washington, DC

Legislative Update

By Rob Cush, Director of Government Affairs

In the 2024 U.S. election, union influence and labor concerns played a significant role in shaping voter behavior and outcomes. Unions, particularly in key swing states like Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin, saw heightened involvement from workers advocating for stronger labor rights and protections. Unions backed candidates who were supportive of worker issues, particularly in the context of wage increases, healthcare benefits, and labor law reforms. This led to a surge in union mobilization, with endorsements and political organizing reaching new levels. Many union leaders pushed for policies that would favor workers' rights, including those that directly opposed corporate-backed political agendas.

Vice President Kamala Harris's campaign was notably favorable to unions, highlighting her administration's efforts to promote pro-union policies, including support for the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act and attempts to strengthen worker protections against corporate union-busting tactics. This helped solidify the support of labor unions, who saw Harris as an ally in their long-standing struggles for better conditions and fair wages. The AFL-CIO and other major labor organizations poured resources into key battleground states, helping to turn out union voters who were concerned about the erosion of workers' rights. In contrast, President-elect, Donald Trump, made efforts to appeal to union members by focusing on economic policies like manufacturing job growth and tax cuts, though his stance on labor issues remained divisive and uncer-

tain. His selection for Labor Secretary Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer (R-Ore) is a smart choice which could signal a new and more receptive stance towards unions from Republicans. AMFA PAC has already met with Rep. Lori Chavez-DeRemer in the past and can hopefully build on this relationship in the future if she is able to secure this roll as secretary.

Ultimately, the 2024 election illustrated the growing political power of unions and their ability to mobilize large voting blocs. Union voters, particularly in industrial and manufacturing areas,

were critical in determining outcomes in several contested regions. While union endorsements did not guarantee electoral victories, their impact on voter turnout and issue-driven advocacy proved to be a key factor in shaping the election's results, underscoring the continuing importance of labor movements in U.S. politics. Even though AMFA stayed out of the Presidential race, AMFA PAC continued to support critical House and Senate races for members on the Aviation Committees. These bridges we build through the PAC will help pave the way for our 2025 legislation agenda.

AMFA PAC: Invest in Your Future

As the saying goes: "If you aren't at the table, you're on the menu." Our non-partisan political action committee allows us to be at the table for the issues that matter most to our members and allows us to fight for our craft.

2025 will be another busy year for the AMFA PAC. Although the FAA reauthorization was signed in May 2024 there are still items of importance that we must continue to ensure are prioritized by the 119th Congress.

Our fight for meaningful workforce development, foreign outsourcing protections, and SIDA badge efficiencies continue to be ongoing.

The most powerful tool we have in our arsenal is your AMFA PAC. This allows us front-row access to the most powerful legislators who are deciding our future. AMFA PAC has a bustling year in store, with events lined up with

top Senators and members of the US House. We will once again name our Legislator of the Year to honor the 2024 Legislator that best represented AMFA's interest. But these opportunities do not exist without your support!

Every AMFA member must invest in their future and support our PAC today. As little as \$10 a month makes a difference. Use the QR codes below to sign up to support the AMFA PAC today.



SWA Payroll deduction

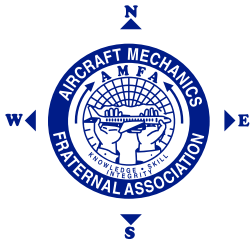


Alaska Payroll deduction



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For U.S. Members Only: Dues Objector Notification

Federal law requires that the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) notify all AMFA-represented employees annually of its dues objector procedures. These procedures require that you notify AMFA between February 1 and March 15, 2025, if you intend to be a dues objector for that year.

Dues objector notices received either before or after these dates will not be accepted and you will not have dues objector status for that year. Dues objectors are required to pay only the portion of dues that is germane to collective bargaining, including but not limited to grievance adjustment and contract administration. The

non-germane percentage of dues is set annually by June 1 and is based on an independent CPA's verification of germane/non-germane expenses for the prior year. A compilation of 2023 expenses was conducted and the fees paid by dues objectors in 2024 were 89.06% of full membership dues.

If a dues objector disagrees with the calculation of the percentage of the reduction, our policy allows for an appeal before an independent arbitrator. The costs of the arbitrator are paid by the Association. Objectors bear the costs of presenting their appeal.

It is important that if you elect to become a dues objector you will no longer be entitled to the rights and privileges of membership, including but not limited to the right to hold a National or Local office, vote in National or Local elections, attend union meetings, participate in contract negotiations, or vote on a contract ratification. We suggest you consider these restrictions before deciding whether or not you wish to become a dues objector.

To receive more information on filing for dues objector status, please call the AMFA National Office at (303) 752-2632 or write to AMFA National, 7853 E. Arapahoe Court, Suite 1100, Centennial, CO, 80112.