



# MSP Chief Pilot Office Newsletter

June 2015

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## **Thank You CA Bill Underwood**

Captain Bill Underwood's tenure in the office is about to come to an end, as he will be returning to line flying this July. Since joining the CPO in August of 2011 Bill has tirelessly served the Delta pilots. In addition to being a pilot advocate during his day-to-day duties, Bill has served as our ATC liaison, establishing a great working relationship with the MSP Center and Tower representatives. The relationship that he has fostered is a great benefit to Delta and our pilots. Bill was a sitting member representing Delta on the NOC (Noise Oversight Committee), which is a highly visible committee overseeing noise issues in the local airport communities. Bill also was a team member on the DeltaNet project that streamlined and reformatted the Flight Ops site.

In addition to his technical expertise, what we will miss most about Bill is his passion for helping this airline, the pilot profession and his fellow Delta pilots. Bill truly exhibits the traits of servant leadership, which in its basic form is defined as putting the needs of others first and helping people and our airline develop and perform as highly as possible. Bill always treats people with honesty, integrity, and respect, which are the core values of our airline. We will certainly miss Bill in the office and wish him all the best as he returns to the line to be a MSP M88 Captain and Line Check Airman.

## **Welcome CA Ray Baltera**

With Bill's departure, we are excited to introduce his replacement, Captain Ray Baltera. Ray will be transitioning into the office starting in June and will officially take over July 1st. Ray comes to our office from the training department, as he was a senior APD on the A320, while maintaining his position as a MSP A320 Captain. Ray was hired in 1985 after graduating from the Naval Academy and serving his tour in the US Navy. He has held numerous instructor positions on various aircraft including the A320/A330/DC10. Ray and his wife of 31 years Sandra have lived in Lakeville, MN his entire airline career. Sandra recently retired after 30+year teaching career. They have 3 grown children, Ray III, Katie, and Melaina. Ray is a great addition to our office team and collectively we will continue to be your advocate and support you the line pilots in any way that we can.

## **MSP RNAV Arrival Update**

The following FAQ's and information is excerpted from the MSP CPO:

*"Why the 280 knot restriction? Wouldn't it be better to stay at altitude longer and descend faster?"*

In constructing these descents the FAA is required to make them flyable in up to 95% of prevailing weather conditions. That means even with a tailwind of 150 knots, you will be able to make all altitude and speed restrictions. At 300 KIAS, not all aircraft types can do that. 280 KIAS has been determined to be the "standard" throughout the NAS (National Airspace System) when constructing and implementing OPD arrivals. This exists in many airports in the National Airspace System. (NAS)

Occasionally if you are in the beginning or end of an arrival "bank" or "rush" you may be asked to speed up or slow down temporarily. ATC's desire will generally be to get you back to 280 KIAS to allow the TBFM (Time Based Flight Management) computers to sequence inbound traffic and maximize the arrival rate given the weather and runways in use.

*"What do I do if ATC vectors me off of the OPD STAR?"*

Comply with the clearance. If you are vectored off of the lateral course, you are no longer considered on the OPD, so you should have also been given an altitude to descend and maintain. When in doubt, ask the controller.

*"What about the speed?"*

Maintain your assigned speed, unless otherwise instructed.

*"...but what if they didn't previously give me a speed?"*

If you are cleared to "Descend Via" you are to maintain cruise mach in your descent until intercepting 280 knots; that's your speed clearance. It's annotated in that handy box labeled "Speed Restriction" on the chart. (note: for clarity the 2 sentences in the box will be reversed so the first sentence will state "Maintain 280 KT until slowed by the STAR.")

*"What if I never reach an altitude to achieve a cruise mach?"*

Once you have joined the lateral confines of the arrival, you are considered to be "established" on the arrival and should then be at 280 knots.

*"MSP Center changed my arrival from the MUSCL to the BLUEM. What's up with that?"*

In the event that traffic flow over one sector or arrival corridor (usually KKILR or MUSCL) is too high, ATC will "offload" traffic to an adjacent arrival (BLUEM or NITZR). It's not ideal, but is one of the tools ATC has to use to keep the arrival rate as high as possible.

*"Why does MSP Approach Control assign me a different runway or transition than I received from Center?"*

We achieved quite a gain and eliminated much confusion when MSP Center began issuing runway transition clearances instead of "expect" transition clearances. But MSP Approach Control has to balance arrivals and may actually assign a runway requiring you to change transitions. Note that Center only assigns "Transitions" but does not actually assign "Runways." Runway assignment comes from Approach.

*"What happens if thunderstorms or other nastiness occurs requiring deviations?"*

Then we go back to "old school" methods that you've done for years. ATC is calling this "OPD Knock it Off" but we made them promise not to use that terminology with us. You will be given vectors off course, and similar to above, will be cleared to "Descend and Maintain" a given altitude. The new clearance altitude may or may not be in conjunction with an arrival fix. Even you are subsequently cleared to a fix and altitude that are on the published OPD RNAV STAR, you are NOT cleared to descend again until you hear the words "Descend Via" (OPD descent) or "Descend and Maintain" (standard descent).

*"What's going on with the delays from the "close-in" or "first tier" airports?"* This issue is being discussed at the highest levels. All parties know and are working towards solutions that will fix this. Some of the solutions will involve implementing new ATC TBFM technology, some will involve inflight modification of the arrival such as vectors off and then back on the OPD as mentioned above. Overall these delays are better than before, but still need to be addressed. This will be fixed.

*"Is all this effort actually saving us money and fuel?"*

The answer to that is yes. Preliminary data shows a fuel savings of approximately 200 - 500 pounds of fuel per flight. Most of this data is derived from other airlines looking at their descent fuel usage. We are in the process of getting extensive FOQA data from all fleets that will cover all regimes of flight that will allow us to do a "deep dive" on total fuel usage (as opposed to just descent) both before and after OPD implementation.

*"So how much do we think we're saving?"*

Preliminary information shows that since implementation at the end of March, MSP arriving A/C have flown approximately 20,000 OPD arrivals. Assuming even a savings of 250 pounds/flight, that would equate to a savings of 5,000,000 pounds of fuel. Dividing 5M by 6.7 (#'s per gallon) yields a savings of approximately 750,000 gallons. 750K @ \$2.50/gallon = approximately \$1,875,000 saved in the 2 months since MSP OPD turn on. If the actual savings per flight is higher than 250#/flight, then obviously the fuel savings is higher as well. This is a rough estimate, and a more comprehensive analysis is being done over the next two months.

Any reduction in fuel burn is also a reduction in carbon emissions, a Delta Corporate goal. The OPDs are here to stay, both in MSP and throughout the country, so if you encounter difficulties or have questions with a clearance while airborne, ask the controller. If you have input on the process, please fill out an FCR or stop in the CPO.

### **PWA 23.N.9**

Every month we receive at least a call or two from pilots "caught" by section 23.N.9 of the PWA. If you're not familiar with this particular provision, it allows a pilot that is on reserve in the current month and transitioning to a regular line the following month to be assigned a reserve trip that spills into the next month (based on the normal reserve trip assignment sequence). If that's too verbose, section 23.N.9 basically allows a reserve pilot transitioning to a regular line to be assigned a trip that flies into days off in the subsequent month.

Of course, the pilot receives appropriate pay and credit for the time that spills into his regular line. However, if the pilot had plans on what he was otherwise expecting to be days off, the conversation with the Crew Scheduler often turns a bit contentious. If you're transitioning from a reserve to a regular line, please be aware of this provision of the PWA.

### **2015 MSP Block Party**

Delta is gearing up to host the Minneapolis Block Party on Saturday, June 6 at the MSP Delta Campus. The event will take place from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and will include music, games, food, kids activities, games and prizes. ***New this year:*** The Minneapolis Block Party is now a ticketed event; employees and retirees ***must*** register and present their tickets and employee ID to gain entrance to the Block Party. Registration is open through June 5. For more information or general questions regarding the Block Party, registration and ticketing system (Who is eligible, PPR information, etc.), or vendor set-up, please email [BlockPartyRegistration@delta.com](mailto:BlockPartyRegistration@delta.com).

Parking at Building C will be extremely limited. Employees are strongly encouraged to carpool and park offsite at the Mall of America East Surface Lot. Shuttle service will be available from the Mall of America East Surface Lot as well as from the airport directly to the Block Party. Bus service will begin at 10 a.m. and will run continuously throughout the day.

### **MSP 2015 Scholarship Recipients**

The Delta Scholarship Fund board of directors is pleased to announce the 2015-2016 Delta Scholars. Congratulations to the following kids of MSP based pilots who all received an Award for Excellence scholarship:

**Award for Excellence** - Laura Aumen, Erich Bobka, Sandra Carson, Paige Frank, Kaitlyn Garrett, Meredith Hollman, Nicholas Pegelow, Catherine Pettinger, Gregory Plumb, Anne Rademacher, Molly Reicher, Hannah Springer, Jordan Ukena, Amy Westerlund, Alexandra Wooden

**Backstrom Memorial Award** – Jonathan Harper

### **Save the Date: Pilot Appreciation Day**

Please join the MSP CPO on Friday, June 12<sup>th</sup> for pizza and prizes! Look for more info in the lounges and let us say thanks for all you do!

### **Four Stripes**

Congratulations to Eric Franke and Gordon Carter on their upgrade to MD-88 Captain!

### **Anniversaries**

*15 Years:* Joe Bunecke, Stewart Gibbons

*20 Years:* Chuck Donahue, Dan Govea, Doug Moyer, Rodney Reynolds, Joe Wondra

*30 Years:* Roger Birdwell, Gary Corwin, Roger Fleischer, Kim Frizzell, George Harter, Rick Hobein, Chuck Hove, Gary Kontz, Dan Kranz, Doug Lamski, Herb LePlatt, John Osciak, Steve Sektnan, Mark Strasser, Jim Tucker,

### **Retirements:**

Stephen Paulson – 26 years  
Mike Mechsner – 18 years  
Therese Chevalier – 16 years

**Thought for the Day**

“To most people, the sky is the limit. To those who love aviation, the sky is home.”

***Your MSP Chief Pilot Office***

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