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Airlines Employed Fewer Pilots, Maintenance Workers in 2007

U.S. scheduled passenger airlines employed 4 percent fewer pilots and 32 percent fewer maintenance workers in 2007 than in 2000, the U.S. Department of Transportation's Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) reported today (Table 1).

The seven large network carriers employed 29.9 percent fewer pilots and 42.6 percent fewer maintenance workers in 2007 than in 2000. The six low-cost carriers now operating employed 24.2 percent more pilots and 2.1 percent more maintenance workers from 2000 to 2007.

United Airlines had the largest reduction in pilots of any network airline from 2000 to 2007 while Alaska Airlines was the only network airline to add pilots during that time. Northwest Airlines had the largest reduction in maintenance workers of any network airline from 2000 to 2007 while Alaska and Continental Airlines were the only network carriers to add maintenance employees during that time (Table 2).

All of the low-cost carriers added pilots from 2000 to 2007. JetBlue Airways had the largest increase while Frontier Airlines had the smallest gain. JetBlue also had the largest increase in maintenance workers of any low-cost airline from 2000 to 2007 while Spirit Airlines had the only reduction (Table 3).

Scheduled passenger airlines include network, low-cost, regional and other airlines. Network carriers operate a significant portion of their flights using at least one hub where connections are made for flights on a spoke system. Low-cost carriers are those that the industry recognizes as operating under a low-cost business model, with lower infrastructure costs and higher productivity.

Airlines that meet the reporting standards report annual employment numbers by job category to BTS. The annual numbers are a 12-month average for the year and are not comparable to the full-time equivalent employee numbers issued monthly by BTS.

Airlines that operate at least one aircraft with the capacity to carry combined passengers, cargo and fuel of 18,000 pounds – the payload factor – and have annual operating revenue of more than \$20 million must report annual employment data.

Pilots

The seven network carriers employed 13.5 pilots per aircraft in 2007, down from 15.0 pilots per aircraft in 2000. The low-cost carriers employed 11.1 pilots per aircraft in 2007, down from 13.3 pilots per aircraft in 2000 even though all of the low-cost carriers added pilots from 2000 to 2007 (Table 4).

AIRLINE EMPLOYMENT PRESS RELEASE

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Northwest had 12.4 pilots per aircraft in 2007, down from 14.2 per aircraft in 2000, the fewest of any network airline. United, with 14.7 per aircraft, down from 18.8 per aircraft in 2000, had the largest decline in the number of pilots per aircraft from 2000 to 2007 but still had the most pilots per aircraft of any network carrier. Continental, which had the fewest pilots per aircraft of any network carrier in 2000, was the only one of the group to have more pilots per aircraft in 2007 than in 2000 (Table 5).

Allegiant Airlines had 9.6 pilots per aircraft in 2007, the fewest of any low-cost airline. Allegiant did not report employment data by category in 2000. JetBlue, with 14.1 per aircraft, down from 38.3 per aircraft in 2000, its start-up year, had the most pilots per aircraft of the six major low-cost carriers (Table 6).

Maintenance

The passenger airlines had 8.3 maintenance workers per aircraft in 2007, down from 13.0 per aircraft in 2000. The network airlines had 12.3 maintenance workers per aircraft in 2007, down from 16.6 per aircraft in 2000. Spending by network airlines for outsourced maintenance increased from 29.6 percent of total maintenance spending in 2000 to 45.3 percent in 2007 (Table 7).

The low-cost airlines had 3.6 maintenance workers per aircraft in 2007, down from 5.2 per aircraft in 2000. Spending by low-cost airlines for outsourced maintenance increased from 52.0 percent of total maintenance spending in 2000 to 54.2 percent in 2007 (Table 7).

Northwest had 0.8 maintenance workers per aircraft in 2007, the fewest of any network airline and down from 13.9 employees per aircraft in 2000. Northwest's spending for outsourcing increased from 23.8 percent of total spending in 2000 to 71.0 percent in 2007. American Airlines had 22.4 maintenance workers per aircraft in 2007, the most of any network airline and up from 21.4 employees per aircraft in 2000. American's spending for outsourcing was unchanged at 23.4 percent of total maintenance spending in 2007 (Table 8).

Allegiant had 3.1 maintenance workers per aircraft in 2007 the fewest of any low-cost airline. Allegiant's spending for outsourcing maintenance work was 34.6 percent of its total maintenance spending. Allegiant did not report employment data by category or maintenance expenses in 2000. Frontier had 7.7 maintenance workers per aircraft in 2007, the most of any low-cost airline but down from 12.8 employees per aircraft in 2000. Frontier's spending for outsourcing increased from 16.6 percent of total maintenance spending in 2000 to 20.5 percent in 2007 (Table 9).

Reporting Notes

Data are compiled from annual reports filed with BTS by commercial air carriers as of May 1. There were 36 reporting scheduled passenger carriers in 2007.

Additional airline employment data and the list of reporting carriers can be found on the BTS website at http://www.bts.gov/programs/airline_information/number_of_employees/labor_category/index.html

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Table 1: Change in Passenger Airline Employees, Maintenance Workers and Pilots 2000-2007

Total Passenger Airlines, Network Airlines and Low-Cost Airlines

	2000	2005	2006	2007	Pct. Change 2000-2007
Passenger Airlines*					
Total	523,208	422,625	415,434	421,463	-19.4
Maintenance	64,248	45,210	43,549	43,490	-32.3
Pilots	66,119	65,289	64,804	63,648	-3.7
Other	392,841	312,120	307,081	314,325	-20.0
Network (7 Airlines)					
Total	425,233	287,615	274,194	288,767	-32.1
Maintenance	55,715	32,782	30,893	31,957	-42.6
Pilots	50,201	34,497	33,993	35,186	-29.9
Other	319,317	220,336	209,308	221,624	-30.6
Low-Cost (6 Airlines)**					
Total	60,207	70,465	71,214	63,550	5.6
Maintenance	3,375	4,381	4,088	3,445	2.1
Pilots	8,626	11,488	11,217	10,713	24.2
Other	48,206	54,596	55,909	49,392	2.5

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, P-10

* All scheduled passenger airlines reporting annual employment numbers to BTS: 30 in 2000, 33 in 2005, 37 in 2006, 36 in 2007.

** Five airlines in 2000, six in 2005, 2006 and 2007.

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AIRLINE EMPLOYMENT PRESS RELEASE
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Table 2: Change in Network Airline Employees, Maintenance Workers and Pilots 2000-2007

	2000	2005	2006	2007	Pct. Change 2000-2007
Alaska					
Total	9,531	9,269	9,307	9,680	1.6
Maintenance	562	199	152	699	24.4
Pilots	1,239	1,331	1,367	1,385	11.8
Other	7,730	7,739	7,788	7,596	-1.7
American					
Total	92,665	74,962	72,757	71,818	-22.5
Maintenance	15,139	14,694	14,296	13,980	-7.7
Pilots	10,408	9,074	8,572	8,343	-19.8
Other	67,118	51,194	49,889	49,495	-26.3
Continental					
Total	42,468	37,305	39,363	40,948	-3.6
Maintenance	3,443	3,504	3,676	3,808	10.6
Pilots	4,656	4,184	4,408	4,598	-1.2
Other	34,369	29,617	31,279	32,542	-5.3
Delta					
Total	71,384	52,231	45,562	47,286	-33.8
Maintenance	5,728	5,917	4,872	5,240	-8.5
Pilots	9,123	6,181	5,706	5,904	-35.3
Other	56,533	40,133	34,984	36,142	-36.1
Northwest					
Total	51,553	35,985	30,729	29,619	-42.5
Maintenance	5,852	1,460	267	265	-95.5
Pilots	5,981	4,995	4,531	4,340	-27.4
Other	39,720	29,530	25,931	25,014	-37.0
United					
Total	95,327	56,661	55,027	55,160	-42.1
Maintenance	15,846	4,785	4,848	4,891	-69.1
Pilots	11,278	6,133	6,277	6,338	-43.8
Other	68,077	45,743	43,902	43,931	-35.5
US Airways					
Total	42,652	21,202	21,449	34,256	-19.7
Maintenance	5,353	2,223	2,782	3,074	-42.6
Pilots	5,330	2,599	3,132	4,278	-19.7
Other	31,969	16,380	15,536	26,904	-15.8

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, P-10

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AIRLINE EMPLOYMENT PRESS RELEASE
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Table 3: Change in Low-Cost Airline Employees, Maintenance Workers and Pilots 2000-2007

	2000	2005	2006	2007	Pct. Change 2000-2007
AirTran					
Total	4,035	6,458	7,415	8,304	105.8
Maintenance	337	364	407	409	21.4
Pilots	547	1,133	1,325	1,498	185.3
Other	3,173	4,961	5,683	6,397	101.6
Allegiant*					
Total	N/A	563	841	1,133	N/A
Maintenance	N/A	46	70	88	N/A
Pilots	N/A	141	178	268	N/A
Other	N/A	394	616	811	N/A
Frontier					
Total	1,745	3,790	4,034	5,219	199.1
Maintenance	231	334	363	418	81.0
Pilots	547	599	655	704	28.7
Other	967	2,862	3,019	4,097	323.7
JetBlue					
Total	693	7,462	9,272	9,713	1,301.6
Maintenance	50	397	456	468	836.0
Pilots	203	1,059	1,451	1,707	640.9
Other	440	6,006	7,365	7,538	1,513.2
Southwest					
Total	28,671	31,543	32,167	33,680	17.5
Maintenance	1,146	1,657	1,643	1,682	46.8
Pilots	3,316	4,535	4,845	5,317	60.3
Other	24,209	25,351	25,679	26,681	10.2
Spirit					
Total	1,911	2,154	2,018	2,145	12.2
Maintenance	246	227	199	161	-34.5
Pilots	244	375	368	442	81.1
Other	1,421	1,563	1,463	1,542	8.5

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, P-10

* Allegiant did not meet the standard for reporting in 2000. The standard is operation of at least one aircraft with the capacity to carry combined passengers, cargo and fuel of 18,000 pounds – the payload factor – and annual operating revenue of more than \$20 million.

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Table 4: Change in Passenger Airline Pilots and Pilots Per Aircraft 2000-2007
Total Passenger Airlines, Network Airlines and Low-Cost Airlines

	2000	2005	2006	2007	Pct. Change 2000-2007
Passenger Airlines*					
Total Pilots	66,119	65,289	64,804	63,648	-3.7
Pilots Per Aircraft	13.3	12.5	12.8	12.1	-9.0
Network (7 Airlines)					
Total Pilots	50,201	34,497	33,993	35,186	-29.9
Pilots Per Aircraft	15.0	12.5	13.1	13.5	-10.0
Low-Cost (6 Airlines)**					
Total Pilots	8,626	11,488	11,217	10,713	24.2
Pilots Per Aircraft	13.3	12.7	12.0	11.1	-16.5

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, P-10

* All scheduled passenger airlines reporting annual employment numbers to BTS: 30 in 2000, 33 in 2005, 37 in 2006, 36 in 2007.

** Five airlines in 2000, six in 2005, 2006 and 2007

Table 5: Change in Passenger Airline Pilots and Pilots Per Aircraft 2000-2007

	2000	2005	2006	2007	Pct. Change 2000-2007
Alaska					
Total Pilots	1,239	1,331	1,367	1,385	11.8
Pilots Per Aircraft	13.6	12.1	12.3	12.9	-5.1
American					
Total Pilots	10,408	9,074	8,572	8,343	-19.8
Pilots Per Aircraft	14.7	12.8	12.5	13.3	-9.5
Continental					
Total Pilots	4,656	4,184	4,408	4,598	-1.2
Pilots Per Aircraft	12.9	12.5	12.6	13.7	6.2
Delta					
Total Pilots	9,123	6,181	5,706	5,904	-35.3
Pilots Per Aircraft	15.2	14.5	13.4	14.3	-5.9
Northwest					
Total Pilots	5,981	4,995	4,531	4,340	-27.4
Pilots Per Aircraft	14.2	11.9	12.1	12.4	-12.7
United					
Total Pilots	11,278	6,133	6,277	6,338	-43.8
Pilots Per Aircraft	18.8	13.3	13.6	14.7	-21.8
US Airways					
Total Pilots	5,330	2,599	3,132	4,278	-19.7
Pilots Per Aircraft	13.4	9.1	13.1	12.6	-6.0

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, P-10

AIRLINE EMPLOYMENT PRESS RELEASE
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Table 6: Change in Low-Cost Airline Pilots and Pilots Per Aircraft 2000-2007

	2000	2005	2006	2007	Pct. Change 2000-2007
AirTran					
Total Pilots	547	1,133	1,325	1,498	185.3
Pilots Per Aircraft	11.4	12.3	11.6	12.0	5.3
Allegiant*					
Total Pilots	N/A	141	178	268	N/A
Pilots Per Aircraft	N/A	11.8	14.2	9.6	N/A
Frontier					
Total Pilots	547	599	655	704	28.7
Pilots Per Aircraft	12.5	13.3	13.9	13.0	4.0
JetBlue					
Total Pilots	203	1,059	1,451	1,707	640.9
Pilots Per Aircraft	38.3	13.8	13.1	14.1	-63.2
Southwest					
Total Pilots	3,316	4,535	4,845	5,317	60.3
Pilots Per Aircraft	10.2	10.5	10.5	11.2	9.8
Spirit					
Total Pilots	244	375	368	442	81.1
Pilots Per Aircraft	10.2	11.7	11.5	12.6	23.5

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, P-10

* Allegiant did not meet the standard for reporting in 2000. The standard is operation of at least one aircraft with the capacity to carry combined passengers, cargo and fuel of 18,000 pounds – the payload factor – and annual operating revenue of more than \$20 million.

Table 7: Change in Passenger Airline Maintenance Employees Per Aircraft and Percent of Maintenance Spending Outsourced* 2000-2007
Total Passenger Airlines, Network Airlines and Low-Cost Airlines

	2000	2005	2006	2007	Pct. Change 2000-2007
Passenger Airlines**					
Maintenance Employees	64,248	45,210	43,549	43,490	-32.3
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	13.0	8.7	8.6	8.3	-36.2
Pct. Outsourced	29.6	42.6	44.9	45.3	53.0
Network (7 Airlines)					
Maintenance Employees	55,715	32,782	30,893	31,957	-42.6
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	16.6	11.9	11.9	12.3	-25.9
Pct. Outsourced	24.3	40.1	41.7	42.5	74.9
Low-Cost (6 Airlines)***					
Maintenance Employees	3,375	4,381	4,088	3,445	2.1
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	5.2	4.8	4.4	3.6	-30.8
Pct. Outsourced	52.0	47.5	52.0	54.2	4.2

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, P-10

* Percent of total maintenance spending that is contracted outside the airline

** All scheduled passenger airlines reporting annual employment numbers to BTS: 30 in 2000, 33 in 2005, 37 in 2006, 36 in 2007.

*** Five airlines in 2000, six in 2005, 2006 and 2007

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Table 8: Change in Network Airline Maintenance Employees Per Aircraft and Percent of Maintenance Spending Outsourced* 2000-2007

	2000	2005	2006	2007	Pct. Change 2000-2007
Alaska					
Maintenance	562	199	152	699	24.4
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	6.2	1.8	1.4	6.5	4.8
Pct. Outsourced	76.2	74.3	53.5	53.8	-22.4 Pts
American					
Maintenance	15,139	14,694	14,296	13,980	-7.7
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	21.4	20.8	20.9	22.4	4.7
Pct. Outsourced	23.4	23.4	22.8	23.4	0.0 Pts
Continental					
Maintenance	3,443	3,504	3,676	3,808	10.6
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	9.6	10.4	10.5	11.4	18.8
Pct. Outsourced	46.6	46.2	48.1	49.2	2.6 Pts
Delta					
Maintenance	5,728	5,917	4,872	5,240	-8.5
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	9.5	13.9	13.1	12.7	33.7
Pct. Outsourced	18.8	34.6	38.8	31.7	12.9 Pts
Northwest					
Maintenance	5,852	1,460	267	265	-95.5
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	13.9	3.5	0.7	0.8	-94.2
Pct. Outsourced	23.8	54.7	69.5	71.0	47.2 Pts
United					
Maintenance	15,846	4,785	4,848	4,891	-69.1
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	26.4	10.4	10.5	11.4	-56.8
Pct. Outsourced	16.3	41.5	44.9	45.7	29.4 Pts
US Airways					
Maintenance	5,353	2,223	2,782	3,074	-42.6
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	13.5	7.7	11.6	9.0	-33.3
Pct. Outsourced	29.6	57.6	43.2	55.0	25.4 Pts

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, P-10

* Percent of total maintenance spending that is contracted outside the airline

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**AIRLINE EMPLOYMENT PRESS RELEASE
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Table 9: Change in Low-Cost Airline Maintenance Employees Per Aircraft and Percent of Maintenance Spending Outsourced* 2000-2007

	2000	2005	2006	2007	Pct. Change 2000-2007
AirTran					
Maintenance Employees	337	364	407	409	21.4
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	7.0	4.0	3.6	3.3	-52.9
Pct. Outsourced	39.2	35.0	48.5	48.4	9.2 Pts
Allegiant**					
Maintenance Employees	N/A	46	70	88	N/A
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	N/A	4.0	6.4	3.1	N/A
Pct. Outsourced	N/A	N/A	38.1	34.6	N/A
Frontier					
Maintenance Employees	231	334	363	418	81.0
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	12.8	7.4	7.7	7.7	-39.8
Pct. Outsourced	16.6	14.9	16.8	20.5	3.9 Pts
JetBlue					
Maintenance Employees	50	397	456	468	836.0
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	10.0	5.2	4.1	3.9	-61.0
Pct. Outsourced	6.8	40.6	44.2	45.7	38.9 Pts
Southwest					
Maintenance Employees	1,146	1,657	1,643	1,682	46.8
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	3.5	3.8	3.6	3.5	0.0
Pct. Outsourced	60.0	50.9	56.2	60.5	0.5 Pts
Spirit					
Maintenance Employees	246	227	199	161	-34.5
Maintenance Empl Per Aircraft	10.3	7.1	6.2	4.6	-55.3
Pct. Outsourced	0.0	12.4	10.0	18.9	18.9 Pts

Source: Bureau of Transportation Statistics, P-10

* Percent of total maintenance spending that is contracted outside the airline

** Allegiant did not meet the standard for reporting in 2000. The standard is operation of at least one aircraft with the capacity to carry combined passengers, cargo and fuel of 18,000 pounds – the payload factor – and annual operating revenue of more than \$20 million.

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