

Pilots sue Wien management

The Airline Pilots Association today charged Wien Air Alaska with bad faith bargaining and interference with ALPA representatives which forced a strike by the airlines 136 pilots. The work stoppage commenced on May 7th.

A complaint filed in U.S. District Court for the District of Alaska alleges that Wien participation in collective bargaining negotiations with "the intent of not reaching agreement with ALPA." It also cited unlawful influence, interference, coercion and discrimination against Wien pilots and the association.

The plaintiff, ALPA and its President, Captain John J. O'Donnel said that both before and after the strike, Wien has "failed to bargain in good faith" on pay, working conditions, retirement benefits, and pilot crew complement on the Boeing

737 which Wien operates. Two key company negotiators walked out on contract talks two days before the strike deadline. Since the strike began no sessions have been held nor are they planned, despite ALPA's expressed willingness to meet with company negotiators anywhere, any time to resume talks.

The association has asked the court to direct Wien management to commence good faith negotiations promptly and stop its illegal private hiring of replacement pilots.

The complaint states that the company's hiring and training of replacement pilots is a violation of the Railway Labor Act, since the company has not exhausted all other mandatory procedures prescribed by the Act. The new pilots, hired from outside of Alaska are also wrongfully being used as a means

to undermine ALPA and the Wien pilot group, the suit charges.

In addition, the complaint noted that the Boeing Commercial Airplane Co. manufacturers of the 737, having further undermined the collective bargaining process by training replacement pilots for Wien.

Wien has flown the 737 with a three-man crew-captain, first officer, second officer, since the airplane was put into service in 1968, but Boeing has trained tow-pilot replacement crews for Wien during the strike. c