UNITED AND PILOTS UNION AGREE IN PRINCIPLE TO EXTEND CONTRACT

News / Airlines

United Continental Holdings Inc and its airline pilots union reached an agreement in principle on Friday to extend the labor contract that covers United's more than 12,000 pilots by two years, the airline said.

United's contract with the Air Line Pilots Association International (ALPA) had been due to run through early 2017. The union and United, the second-largest U.S. airline by capacity, in early October agreed to enter into talks to negotiate an extension of the contract, ahead of original plans to open talks in 2016.

The head of the union announced the agreement in a memo to its members, which was seen by Reuters.

Neither United nor the union disclosed terms under the agreement, which is subject to reaching a tentative deal with the pilot union's leadership, followed by ratification by the union members.

The union in its memo said its negotiators followed guidance to "look for improvements without any offsets."

United in a statement praised the agreement.

"The fact that we were able to reach this Agreement in Principle in fewer than 30 days is a direct

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result of the positive, collaborative relationship between ALPA leadership and United," Mike Bonds, United's executive vice president of human resources and labor relations said in the statement.

Drafting of the agreement's final language will take at least two to three weeks, the union memo said.

United's management has made securing labor contracts a top focus following a leadership change in September. New Chief Executive Oscar Munoz, now on temporary leave following a heart attack, has said the integration of United and Continental since their 2010 merger had been "rocky" for employees and customers.

United said earlier this month it would not outsource more jobs in baggage handling or customer service until at least 2019 and would start expedited contract talks for those employees, represented by the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers.

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