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CONTINENTAL FLEET SERVICE WORKERS VOTE OVERWHELMINGLY TO JOIN TEAMSTERS

Workers at O'Hare, Other National Airports Take Crucial Step for Brighter Future

By an overwhelming margin, nearly 8,000 fleet service workers with Continental Airlines voted nationwide on Friday to join the Teamsters.

Despite an anti-worker, anti-union campaign waged by the Houston-based company, the fleet service workers now join thousands of Continental mechanics that have enjoyed Teamster representation for more than 12 years. Teamsters Local 781 will represent approximately 140 fleet service workers at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport.

"This exciting election is the result of a collaborative nationwide effort to bring the benefits, advantages and security of a Teamster contract to the men and women of Continental Airlines," said Richard Smith, Local 781 President. "In light of today's tough economic climate, it's important for all workers to have a voice in their employment and their future."

Continental fleet service workers handle baggage, cargo and other essential jobs, including directing jets to the terminal gates, at airports across the country. With Continental governed under the Railway Labor Act, the National Mediation Board administered the election. For the labor victory to occur, 50 percent plus one of all the workers in the national unit needed to vote for the Teamsters.

The threshold was exceeded with 4,129 votes for union representation.

"Traditionally, more than 10 percent of eligible voters do not vote in elections that fall under the Railway Labor Act, which makes these numbers truly overwhelmingly," said John T. Coli, President of Teamsters Joint Council 25 and International Vice President of the Central Region. "Union members, organizers and leaders who came together to ensure this victory will continue to work hard to secure a strong contract at Continental."

Teamsters Local 781, an affiliate of Teamsters Joint Council 25, represents more than 1,000 mechanics with Continental and United Airlines at O'Hare and Midway International Airports.