

## **Call on Airline Industry to Focus More on Solutions, Less on Complaining**

Buffalo, New York - August 28, 2014 - The 'Families of Continental Flight 3407' expressed their support for a recently-announced flight training partnership initiative between Metropolitan State University and Colorado Northwestern Community College (see link below), and called on the aviation industry as a whole to work harder to effectively implement new FAA first officer qualification requirements.

"As always, our concern first and foremost is making our regional airlines as safe as possible, in this case putting first officers who are as well-prepared as can be in the cockpit," stated Karen Eckert of Williamsville, New York, who lost her sister Beverly Eckert, a noted 9/11 widow and activist. "These new qualification guidelines will provide a much more robust foundation for entry-level first officers including the requirement of attaining a type rating, as well as significantly increasing the amount of hands-on flying experience they will have received prior to entering a commercial airline cockpit. Additionally, we are very encouraged by the actions taken by these academic institutions to help these aspiring pilots to minimize the costs of this training as well as the time required to attain the needed experience, and hope that other training entities will adopt similar 'outside-the-box' approaches."

The agreement, which partners Metropolitan State's classroom aeronautics program with Colorado Northwestern's pilot training program, allows student pilots to receive flight training at a 10-15% reduction in cost, makes reduced-rate housing available near the airport, and provides enhanced advising support at both institutions. Additionally, as the FAA regulations now provide for, the program will allow its students to be granted a 250 flight hour credit towards a restricted Airline Transport Pilot (ATP) rating with 1,250 hours of flight time, as opposed to the standard 1,500 hours.

"Since the FAA followed Congress's unanimous lead and implemented this new qualifications rule last year, it has been disappointing to hear so many of the regional airline CEO's and industry lobbyists cry wolf as opposed to stepping up to the plate," stated Scott Maurer of Moore, South Carolina, who lost his thirty year old daughter Lorin in the crash. "With the airlines pulling in record profits and these CEO's raking in seven-figure salaries, it is extremely difficult for us to hear all of this congressional testimony and media interviews that the sky is falling for the industry, especially in light of the tragic price that Lorin and our loved ones paid on that February night. The question is simple, 'Are these CEO's only worried about preserving the status quo of paying their first officers food stamp-level wages, or are they truly dedicated to raising the safety bar and achieving a true One Level of Safety for regional airlines?' It is our hope that this initiative in Colorado will serve as a shining example for other stakeholders to spend their time and energy not in seeking to water down the new guidelines, but rather to

come up with approaches that supplement and strengthen them. That is what the American flying public deserves."

<http://northdenvernews.com/new-aviation-partnership-lowers-tuition-cost-flight-hours-requirements-aspiring-pilots/>