

## **Urgent Action Needed to Save Canadian Aviation Maintenance Industry!**

Monday March 8, 2010

For Immediate Release

Toronto, ON – The recent announcement by Air Canada/AVEOS of the layoff of more than one thousand aircraft maintenance mechanics is the latest indication that Canada is in danger of losing its place in this growing global industry.

“If we don’t do something right now, these jobs and this industry aren’t coming back,” declared IAMAW Canadian General Vice-President Dave Ritchie. The IAMAW is calling for an immediate response to this crisis.

“Air Canada has not accepted the responsibility for administering measures like an EI Worksharing program, to mitigate the damage, in this time of high unemployment,” said IAMAW District 140 President and General Chairperson Chuck Atkinson. “There also needs to be greater support for training and re-training programs to assist impacted workers and communities.”

“While the Mulroneu government’s Air Canada privatization legislation contained a requirement for Air Canada to continue to have maintenance bases in Mississauga, Winnipeg and Montréal, this seems to have no appreciable effect on the company’s plans to phase out a large part of heavy maintenance work and ship it abroad, with the inherent risks of weaker regulation and lower standards,” explained Atkinson.

“Canada is losing an industry which has considerable growth potential as a globally competitive industry – an industry that could provide a growing number of highly-skilled high-technology jobs for young Canadians,” said Ritchie. “Canada needs an industrial strategy to maintain and build the capacity of this sector – starting with domestic procurement requirements for maintenance on Canadian-registered commercial aircraft being done in Canada where possible and including support for investment to modernize equipment.”

The IAMAW calls on our governments to step up to this challenge.

The International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers is the largest union at Air Canada, representing over 11,000 workers.

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## **Backgrounder**

The impact of the upcoming Air Canada/AVEOS layoffs next month will be felt not only in Vancouver, Winnipeg and Montreal but in Air Canada stations across the country.

In order to keep on working, many IAMAW members will have to move to another city via seniority bumping clauses in their collective agreement. For them, this means the uprooting of families, disposal of homes in uncertain real estate markets and long periods away from loved ones during this transition period.

Air Canada/AVEOS employs about 3,250 maintenance personnel performing Heavy Maintenance (major overhaul) work. About 1,010 of those will be laid off in Winnipeg, Vancouver, and Montreal. Many of these mechanics will exercise their seniority rights and displace junior mechanics in other cities such as Calgary, Edmonton, Toronto and Ottawa. In the end technicians will be laid off across Canada. Because of the slowdown in air transport in Canada and worldwide, it will be very difficult for those laid off to find work in the industry.

Winnipeg will lose about 50% of its Heavy Maintenance work. Winnipeg is losing 300 aircraft mechanics in April and another 45 in June.

The Vancouver base will lose about 50% of its Heavy Maintenance work. Vancouver is losing 218 mechanics in total, with 60 layoffs in April, and the remaining 158 in June. –

Montreal is the largest location for AVEOS Heavy Maintenance, employing about 2,250 mechanics. In Montreal, 444 mechanics will be laid off. This represents the largest number of technicians being laid off in any one location.

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There is no specified date for these people to return to work.

For all of these Canadian cities the question becomes: Will there be an industry for them to come back to and **Will They Come Back?**