



American Airlines' regionals offer \$15,000 signing bonus to new pilots

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American Airlines' three wholly owned regional affiliates - Envoy Air, Piedmont Airlines and PSA Airlines—simultaneously announced they will pay a \$15,000 bonus to all newly hired pilots, effective immediately.

The move comes amid the backdrop of US regional airlines having increasing difficulty hiring new pilots. Citing FAA's requirement that pilots accumulate 1,500 flight hours before becoming a commercial airline pilot and other factors, Regional Airline Association (RAA) president Faye Malarkey Black said US regionals sought to hire 5,000 new pilots in 2015, but actually were able hire fewer than 3,000 because of a "considerable decline in the quality of eligible pilot candidates."

The Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA) union has called on US regionals to offer higher starting salaries as a way to alleviate the pilot hiring problem.

American's regionals are touting the signing bonus, plus a career path to mainline American cockpits, as a drawing card for flight deck crew.

"We're hoping that the \$15,000 signing bonus will encourage more pilots to look at Piedmont as a career choice," Lyle Hogg, the CEO of Salisbury, Maryland-based Piedmont, said in a statement. "Piedmont offers a very quick upgrade from first officer to captain and a guaranteed job at American Airlines in a few years, so it's a great career option."

Irving, Texas-based Envoy said in a statement that "with our flow-through program to the mainline, [newly hired pilots] can enter training at American Airlines in less than six years from hire."

In addition to the hiring bonus, Piedmont and Dayton, Ohio-based PSA also announced a \$5,000 bonus for referring a pilot who is ultimately hired. "It's a great opportunity for all of our employees to participate in our recruiting efforts," Hogg said. "Any employee can recommend a friend or family member pilot through our human resources department and get rewarded with a bonus for doing so."

Piedmont is seeking to hire more than 200 pilots in 2016

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