

# Continental, Piedmont and Hawaiian have best consumer complaint records for first half of 1973, CAB data show

Continental Airlines took top spot among U. S. trunkline carriers with the best record in consumer complaints for the first half of 1973.

Among the local service carriers, Piedmont Airlines continued its fine record edging out Frontier for the first six months with 3.92 complaints per 100,000 passenger boardings compared to the latter's 3.96.

Hawaiian Airlines, meanwhile, maintained its lead among regional carriers with only 1.04 complaints per 100,000 boardings compared to Aloha's 1.42.

Most encouraging aspect of the six-month figures is that the rate of increase in total industry complaints has dropped off from the alarming high of the first part of the year. Civil Aeronautics Board's Office of Consumer Affairs received 6,128 complaints about U. S. scheduled airline service for the first six months. It had received 5,483 for the first four months (ATW, June, p. 42).

Although the rate of increase showed a decline, the number of complaints for the first half of this year was much higher than for the same period last year. There were 7,676 total complaints against all passenger service for the first half of 1973, and there were 5,146 for the same period last year.

A major reason for the increase is said to be that passengers are growing increasingly aware of the CAB consumer office; i.e., they now have a vent for their frustrations. But this theory is offset by the record among non-U. S. carriers, complaints about which the CAB also receives. These carriers produced 556 complaints for the first half of 1973,

an actual decline from the 600 for the same period last year.

According to CAB, the greatest cause for complaints is a delayed flight. Of the 7,676 total complaints for the first half of this year, 1,020 concerned flight delays. The next biggest sources of annoyance are problems with fares and refunds.

Although there is substantial shifting of positions among the carriers in the rankings from month to month, a few carriers appear to stay near the top. Among the trunks, Continental, Western and Delta are usually ranked one, two, three.

Delta had the best record for 1972. Western had the best record for the first four months of 1973, and Continental took over the top spot for the first half.

Also of interest in the trunkline standings is the fact that three carriers — Continental, Northwest and TWA — had better complaint rates for the first half of 1973 than for all of 1972, despite the higher number of total complaints for the industry as a whole.

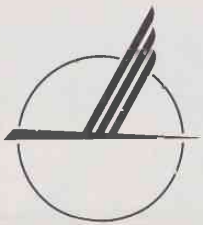
Northwest is showing the greatest improvement with only 3.16 complaints per 100,000 boardings, compared to 4.60 during 1972, when it had pilots' strike. TWA advanced from last place in 1972 to sixth place for the first half of this year.

Among the locals, Piedmont is establishing itself as a consistent leader. It had the best record for 1972, and led again for the first half of this year. Frontier is showing the greatest improvement, advancing from sixth place in 1972 to second place for the first half of 1973.

How U. S. airlines rate with the consumer  
Jan. - June 1973

Airline	Complaint rate
<b>U. S. trunkline carriers</b>	
Continental	2.19
Western	2.53
Delta	3.04
Northwest	3.16
United	3.53
Trans World	5.45
Braniff	7.29
American	8.73
National	9.39
Pan American	9.48
Eastern	11.41
<b>Local service carriers</b>	
Piedmont	3.92
Frontier	3.96
North Central	4.13
Texas Int'l.	4.32
Southern	5.23
Hughes Airwest	5.44
Ozark	6.73
Allegheny	7.89
<b>Regional airlines</b>	
Hawaiian	1.04
Aloha	1.42
Wien Air Alaska	1.97
Alaska	20.48

—from Air Transport World  
September 1973



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### Board approves realignment

There seems to be some confusion on the extent of flexibility granted Piedmont in the route realignment approved by the Civil Aeronautics Board for effectiveness October 26.

First, the one segment route map published in the last Piedmonitor has led people to the false conclusion that we now have nonstop authority in such markets as Baltimore-New York, Atlanta-Memphis and Chicago-Cincinnati. Those and other similar city pairs are restricted from nonstop flights. As explained in the first article "the order of points on the proposed new certificate has no significance."

Second, Piedmont will continue to be restricted in a few over 140 city pair combina-

tions, all of which have competitive authorizations. While restrictions will thus continue to be abundant, there is considerable improvement compared to the approximate 560 restrictions in our certificate for the 1,118 city pairs we are authorized to serve.

Although the new single segment certificate is relatively simple, when compared to the old multi-segment certificate, there are many complications involved.

Any questions you have on the route re-alignment, or any questions from the general public should be directed to Bob Kadlec, director of research, INT-ZZ.

### presstime postscripts

The accidental death and dismemberment insurance plan has been reopened. This insurance plan is optional and the monthly premiums are paid through payroll deductions.

Any employee desiring to enroll or change the amount of coverage must do so before December 1, 1973. The last page of the booklet should be used for this purpose.

Check your bulletin board for further details.

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Because of the unexpected jet equipment shortage some flights have been cancelled and adjustments made in other flights, effective November 1. Detailed changes have been teletyped to all stations. A new employee schedule will be issued immediately. At this time there is no plan to revise the October 28 passenger timetable to reflect these changes.

### Living costs are up, but Piedmont salaries are up even more

During recent months when living costs have been constantly increasing, we may be finding it more and more difficult to "make ends meet" even with wages at an all-time high — and for good reason. According to an article in a recent issue of the Tax Foundation's "Monthly Tax Features," a person earning 35% more in 1973 than he earned in 1966 actually has less "purchasing power" than he had in 1966 after taking into account tax increases and inflationary cost increases.

Here's how the computation works. Take a family of four with one earner and \$10,000 income in 1966, with a 35% pay increase he would earn \$13,500 in 1973. Federal income taxes withheld would have risen from \$945 to \$1,401. The Social Security tax increased from \$277 to \$632 and state income taxes have added another \$139 to the tax bite. During this period the dollar has lost 36.6% of its purchasing

power due to inflation. After putting it all together, the person in the example has lost approximately \$466 in terms of 1966 dollars.

Out of curiosity, we applied the same factors to wages paid to Piedmont employees to see how we are doing. The over-all annual wages of Piedmont employees increased 69% from June 30, 1966 to June 30, 1973. In checking wages of the various classifications of employees, we find that the lowest rate of increase for any classification was 58%. For a person in the group with the lowest rate of increase, his purchasing power has risen 8% to 10%, as demonstrated by the first table:

Employees with the over-all average wage increase have experienced a 14% to 16% growth in 1966 dollars as shown in the second table.

These figures do not take into account the wider range of employee benefits now paid

for by the Company which were formerly paid for, at least in part, by the employees.

Salary	Increase	Loss Due To Inflation	Net Gain In Purchasing Power	Percentage of Increase
58% Increase				
1966	1973	1966-1973		
\$ 5,000	\$ 7,900	\$ 657	\$1,794	\$449 10.0%
7,500	11,850	1,183	2,564	603 9.4%
10,000	15,800	1,740	3,329	731 8.7%
12,500	19,750	2,395	4,031	824 8.1%

Salary	Increase	Loss Due To Inflation	Net Gain In Purchasing Power	Percentage of Increase
58% Increase				
1966	1973	1966-1973		
\$ 5,000	\$ 8,450	\$ 866	\$1,885	\$ 699 15.7%
7,500	12,675	1,432	2,718	1,025 16.0%
10,000	16,900	2,176	3,507	1,217 14.5%
12,500	21,125	2,893	4,266	1,466 14.4%