

# Pinnacle defends pilot safety

Too soon  
to know  
cause of  
Flight 3407  
crash, NTSB  
spokesman  
says

By **WAYNE RISHER**

*risher@commercialappeal.com*

The Memphis-based owners of Colgan Air defended training practices and pilot credentials Wednesday, saying it's premature to speculate about the cause of last week's fatal crash in Buffalo, N.Y.

Pinnacle Airlines issued a statement after *The Wall Street Journal*, citing unnamed sources, said evidence pointed to pilot error in the Continental Flight 3407 crash that killed 50. A statement issued by officials at Pinnacle's headquarters near Memphis International Airport said crew training programs "meet or exceed the regulatory re-

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investigating team at the NTSB," said Pinnacle CEO Phil Trenary. "Right now, the only absolute fact is that we do not definitively know the cause of this accident."

National Transportation Safety Board spokesman Keith Holloway said it is too early to definitively say what brought the

requirements," and that the pilot, Capt. Marvin Renslow, had the highest possible pilot certification.

"It's important not to jump to conclusions, and instead focus on what is factual and released by the

plane down, but nothing mechanically wrong with the plane has been found.

Colgan is a Manassas, Va.-based airline that flies regional routes under contracts with Continental, U.S. Airways and United. The holding company's other subsidiary, Pinnacle Airlines Inc., is based in Memphis and flies as Delta Connection and Northwest Airlink.

The companies have about 6,000 employees, including nearly 2,000 in the Memphis area. Officials have studied consolidation of Colgan and Pinnacle subsidiaries at a single location in Memphis,

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# AIRLINE

either Downtown or in the airport area, but haven't reached a decision.

Pinnacle stock got hammered Wednesday, dropping 28.4 percent to close at \$1.31 per share. It was at \$2.35 last Thursday, the day of the crash.

Trenary said he's optimistic about Pinnacle's prospects, despite the challenging times.

"Pinnacle has the best model in the regional airline industry," he said. "We have a good strategy and great team in place for continued growth and creation of shareholder value.

"In terms of financial impact from the accident, we are fully insured to a level comparable to major airlines and we don't anticipate financial problems. Both airlines continue to operate normally, and we appreciate the confidence our customers and partners have shown."

The Wall Street Journal sto-

## COLGAN AIR STATEMENT

"Historically, NTSB investigations are confidential and involve a thorough determination of the facts before public statements are made.

"Colgan Air continues to cooperate in every respect with the NTSB as it conducts the investigation. As such, we will respect the integrity of the NTSB ongoing investigation by not commenting on specifics. However, we do feel compelled to comment on public speculation about potential causes of the accident.

"Here are the facts about our operations. Colgan has instilled a systemic culture of safety throughout our organization that is rooted in significant investment in crew training, systems, leadership and equipment.

"Our crew training programs meet or exceed the regulatory requirements for all major airlines. Our ground and air training is designed in coordination with the aircraft manufacturer, one of the most respected providers of aviation flight training and the Federal Aviation Administration utilizing state-of-the-art training devices such as full-motion simulators, among others.

ry cited evidence that after the plane's stall alarm sounded, Renslow pulled back on the controls and increased power,

rather than following proper procedure of pushing forward on controls. Previous speculation centered on ice buildup

"In addition, Colgan has committed significant financial resources to upgrade aircraft safety, efficiency and quality in recent years. The Q400 is a sophisticated, highly capable aircraft that is designed for cold-weather operations with a long, proven history of safe operations globally.

"Captain Renslow had 3,379 total hours of flight experience and was Airline Transport Pilot rated, which is the highest level of certification available. That rating, combined with 172 hours of formal training on the Q400 aircraft, qualified him fully in accordance with all applicable Federal Aviation Regulations.

"We continuously review our safety policies and training procedures as part of our everyday operations. In the wake of an accident, we are even more focused on ensuring our operations remain safe and have specifically reexamined our procedures for this aircraft. We have reinforced strict adherence to all of our flight operations policies, including flying during icing conditions.

"We continue to fly confidently and appreciate the support of our partners and customers."

on the Bombardier Q400's wings and tail.

— Wayne Risher: 529-2874