

October 1st, 2010

To my valued and faithful friends:

There is absolutely no way for me to begin this letter without sounding cliché. I know we hate reaching deep, so be warned, this is about to get heavy! This hobby we are all addicted to, we may joke around about it, but it's more than sitting at your computer, hopping into an aircraft, and getting airborne. It's more than a "game" we play. For most of us, it's following the dream... the dream of being able to break the boundaries of gravity and human ability... to climb to 35,000 feet and see the world from an entirely different perspective that makes us realize just how small we are (even compared to a virtual world). It's living out a passion for aviation that most of us have no other means to do in the real world. It's always been our philosophy here at Virtual Allegiant Air that this "hobby" of ours was meant to be enjoyed directly from the virtual cockpit, and not from the "desk"; that **those who participate should chase their dreams wherever they take them** (remember that... it's important).

Recently...

This has recently come to play in some decisions I've made in my personal and virtual life, and I've started chasing a dream of my own. Some of you may know that two months ago, two of us started toying with the idea of opening two sister airlines to Virtual Allegiant... one would be simulating a real world international cargo airline (much like the operations at vAAY), and the other would be a fictional smaller passenger airline based exclusively at KSTL. I'm happy to report both of those sister airlines are growing and evolving into what can only be described as our dreams... defined. Ron has always wanted to start his own international cargo operation using a variety of aircraft and I have always, truly wanted to open a fictional airline based at KSTL. *You may be wondering why I didn't just start Gateway in the first place. Well at the time, Allegiant was not well known, and they began flying into the airport I controlled, which immediately sparked my interest. After doing some research on their business model, I was hooked. But had I not jumped into any decision right away, and spent about another week considering the options, I probably would have started Gateway then!*

Factors We Face

The pressure of operating Virtual Allegiant in the shadow of the real airline was intense due to the fact that we didn't realistically simulate their operations, and we didn't fit in their shadow. Many members, from pilot to administrator, would receive negative feedback from other people because of this. Additionally, another Allegiant VA opened earlier this year who's operations realistically simulate Allegiant. That drove our operations down even farther. All these factors, coupled with the fact that I've always had a passion for the St. Louis city and airport, is what contributed to the development of Gateway Airlines. As I got more involved with Gateway, my time and energy has been shifting away from vAAY, and toward getting Gateway Airlines off the ground. Operations at vAAY have been dwindling due to the above factors, and because of real-world summer activities and families. But this is all okay, because there are more benefits to operating a fictional airline.

Benefits

One of the biggest benefits is the freedom to do what we want, with no expectations. Together, we can mold Gateway Airlines into what we want it to be, what we dream it to be... not what it's supposed to be or what someone else thinks it should be based on another airline. Another benefit is the ability to start over, and for all of us to be involved at the ground level of two new airlines! So, due in part to the factors listed above and in an effort to follow our dreams, **we have decided to close operations here at Virtual Allegiant Air effective November 1st, 2010.**

It's All Cool

I'm surprised to find that I'm not as upset as I thought I would be when vAAY closes. Although I am a little heavy-hearted, I see this as a positive outcome more than a negative one. What we did while flying the blue tail is nothing short of amazing. The hours spent behind the yoke, as well as the time and effort put forth by the staff... it really defines who we are as a group of people, and as a virtual family. As pilots, we made a name for Virtual Allegiant Air... constantly receiving praises from controllers all over the VATSIM world on how professional our pilots are and how vAAY stands out from any other VA, (little did they know how much more different we were on the inside). So instead of ending our operations on a negative, sad note... we are celebrating how far we've come as a group... and our future.

The Future

Although the Virtual Allegiant airline will be folding operations, our family will still be moving on to bigger and better things as we become Gateway Airlines. vAAY paved the way to where we're headed. Gateway is a culmination of the last three years of work, learning, and experience. And together with Evergreen International Cargo, we now face a bright future with two airlines, united in the same pilot family we had at Virtual Allegiant. At this point in time, you have exciting options.

What This Means for You

First and foremost, **it is my sincerest wish that our Virtual Allegiant family sticks together-- that we not lose a single person.** You guys are what made this great... without you, there's little hope. This is such an experienced, professional group of pilots and friends; to see us disband would break my heart. And you'll never find someone as passionate about a virtual airline adventure as I am about Gateway, and Ron is about Evergreen. Remember, these airlines are our dreams. Literally, I dream about Gateway, how sad is that? You all are cordially invited to share this experience with us, and watch as they develop. Both airlines are offering a 100% hour-carryover for all vAAY family members, so there's no time lost and no hard feelings as we progress into the future. And to honor the dedication and commitment we all put into vAAY, all Virtual Allegiant members will receive an exclusive award to recognize our experience. We feel creating this passenger/cargo partnership is the best foot to put forward. It covers all the bases for any itch you may have. More information on each airline will be provided. Please read up on them for further details about each airline and the partnership.

Virtual Allegiant Air
www.virtualallegiantair.com

Summary

Even though we all hate to see Virtual Allegiant close, we shouldn't go into this with heavy hearts. This is simply the end of one chapter, and the beginning of another, for a group of people whose experience and professionalism is unmatched, and whose teamwork helped create one of the best communities in the VA world. That community is moving on to the next exciting step. The vAAY brand is closing... not the family. Virtual Allegiant Air was a great airline and a great stepping stone to where we are evolving now. You all are encouraged to join both Gateway Airlines for the passenger side of the house, and Evergreen Virtual for the cargo side, and to let the blue-tail legacy grow through our sister airlines. Please join us... it's going to be an exciting ride.

Forever a "blue-tail",

Wes Miles
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www.virtualallegiantair.com