The heavy-maintenance facility at Pittsburgh International Airport knows planes—from top to bottom, inside and out.

By Tara Titcombe | Photos by David Aschkenas
Leader of the Pack

**MEET: Bob Black**
**TITLE: Lead Mechanic**
**TIME WITH US AIRWAYS: 32 years**

As a lead mechanic, Bob Black oversees a crew of 12 and coordinates work assignments to make sure planes meet their ETR (estimated time of readiness). That’s one of the biggest challenges for Black. “There’s a little anxiety because we all want to succeed,” he says. “We’re all driven to succeed.” But with a strong team, the job becomes easier. “There is an absolute dedication of the guys that maintain these airliners,” Black says. His favorite part of the job happens once a job is complete. “After we get the plane all back together, I love watching it fly,” Black says. “People that I’ll probably never see in my entire life depend on the work that we do, and that is really cool.”

Fixing in Figures

| 18,000 | man hours to complete a major heavy maintenance visit on an Airbus 320 |
| 170 | average number of planes serviced at PIT hangar yearly |
| 2,300 | roughly the number of items listed on an inspection checklist |
| 24/7 | hours a day and days a week that the hangar works |
| 380 | mechanics and inspectors at PIT |
| 27 years | average seniority of the mechanics at PIT |

Learning to Fly

**MEET: Joe Fleet**
**TITLE: A&P Mechanic**
**TIME WITH US AIRWAYS: 28 years**

Probably one of the nicest guys you’ll ever meet, Joe Fleet knew instantly that he was going to work in the hangar. “I first started delivering mail here,” he says. “I had never seen a place this big, and I thought, ‘I’m going to work here someday.’” He has now been at the hangar for 24 years. Although Fleet typically works on the wings, he keeps updated on all aspects. “You’re always learning, and you need to continue so you don’t become complacent,” he says. “You have to keep learning to become proficient.”

His favorite part of the job? “At the end of the day, I like the satisfaction of getting a job done well and to completion.”

Hefty Achievement

We’re not the only ones taking note of US Airways’ maintenance team. Recently the airline was awarded the prestigious 2012 MRO of the Year Award for Airline Maintenance Excellence by Aviation Week and Overhaul & Maintenance magazine. The award is given to the world’s top maintenance-related companies. US Airways is recognized for reducing the number of aircraft out of service due to maintenance, significantly lowering deferred maintenance items, and for becoming the first airline to have its FAA-approved Safety Management System program validated by the International Air Transport Association’s Operational Safety Audit.