SIX AVIATION ISSUES TO WATCH IN 2016

News / Airlines

It's a new year and as always, I expect it will be a busy year for aviation.

Here's what we're going to be watching in 2016.

1. American Airlines has entered into labor talks with its largest union group, the Transport Workers Union/International Association of Machinists alliance who represents thousands of mechanics, ground workers and simulation technicians. American chief executive Doug Parker has told workers they will see significant pay increases in their contract offers but what work rule changes might management ask for during these negotiations? We'll have to see if they can come to an agreement in 2016.

2. It has been three months since a federal judge in Dallas heard testimony at a hearing in the Dallas Love Field gate case. He said he would rule quickly but I guess his definition of "quickly" is different than mine. By not ruling, Delta Air Lines has continued to fly its five flights a day to Atlanta by using space at a Southwest Airlines gate.

3. Labor tensions rose at Southwest Airlines last year with both pilots and flight attendants rejecting contracts. Will Southwest management be able to reach new agreements that members of both unions are willing to accept?

4. It seems there is a new international carrier announcing service to Dallas/Fort Worth Airport every month. While executive have talked about the construction of a possible Terminal F for

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years, will 2016 be the year they finally decided that they have to build it?

5. Fuel prices continue to remain low which means airlines are continuing to reap record profits. Experts say airlines can expect cheap fuel all year so we'll see if that forecast holds true.

6. Delta Air Lines has dominated its rivals when it comes to operational excellence. In September, the airline only canceled six flights all month. Can Delta reign supreme for another year or will another carrier finally catch up to the Atlanta-based airline?

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