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News about Piedmont. The Up-And-Coming Airline.



Retired Chairman T.H. Davis (left) and President William R. Howard, newly-elected Chief Executive Officer for Piedmont.

T. H. Davis retires, Howard new CEO

T. H. Davis, founder of Piedmont Airlines, retired May 4.

President William R. Howard succeeds Davis as Chief Executive Officer and will preside over future meetings of the Piedmont Aviation, Inc., Board of Directors.

Davis will continue as a member of the Board and also serve as Chairman of the Board's executive committee.

Under the leadership of Davis and Howard, Piedmont has grown and prospered more since deregulation became the law of the land than any other airline. Their leadership has given Piedmont unparalleled achievements in the challenging years since 1978.

Piedmont has grown from 4,300 employees in 1978 to more than 8,700 today. Piedmont has earned nearly \$100 million in after tax profits during those years, a period when the industry as a whole was suffering record losses.

Piedmont's fleet has grown from 46 aircraft in 1978, including 16 YS-11 propjets, to a fleet that by the end of 1983 will number 83 modern B727-200s and B737-200s.

By the end of 1983, Piedmont will

more than double the 4,614,000 passengers the airline carried in 1978.

All these statistics are an ever farther cry from Piedmont's first year, 1948, when Davis founded a fledgling regional carrier that flew a small fleet of DC-3s between the North Carolina and Virginia coasts across routes terminating in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Between the first flight on February 20, 1948, and today, Piedmont has successfully mastered several major transitions. Piedmont became the first regional carrier to earn a permanent certificate of public convenience and necessity; Piedmont has grown from the piston to the jet age, while retaining service to more medium and small hub cities than any other carrier; Piedmont has consistently been ranked among the top three carriers in terms of fewest complaints per hundred thousand passengers carried. It has steadily built the number of passengers and markets it serves at the same time.

In recent months Piedmont has been cited publicly by the President

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"There was a very spontaneous feeling on the part of Piedmont people all across the system. They all wanted to do something nice for Tom Davis. Something he wouldn't do for himself," Art Whitaker, station manager-Roanoke, explained.

Despite the millions of dollars he has authorized to be spent to modernize and expand Piedmont itself, the employees generally agreed that one thing Tom Davis would not be was extravagant with himself.

"He wouldn't think of spending \$40,000 on a personal car; we just knew he wouldn't," Whitaker explained.

And that was how the idea began for the employees to voluntarily raise the money to buy a Mercedes-Benz convertible for Tom Davis to drive into retirement. In two weeks, the money was raised.

Whitaker presided over the presentation June 4 following the Piedmont Games to the surprise of Tom Davis, and the satisfaction of some 1,000 on-lookers.

