

# New GAG HQ is dedicated On site of Piedmont's founding

The evening was filled with history and yet everywhere was evidence of the future. Piedmont's General Aviation Group—the company's founding division which is in the business of selling and servicing corporate and private aircraft in the country—was having a celebration.

Television cameras were positioned and buffet tables were readied and, at 6:30 p.m. on Jan. 16, a ribbon was cut at the front door of the beautiful new 40,000 square foot General Aviation Group office/hangar complex at Smith Reynolds Airport in Winston-Salem.

The complex was built on the same grounds where Piedmont Aviation was born over 40 years ago as the Camel City Flying Service. Two pre-World War II hangars and two 1940-era buildings were torn down to make room for the structure. Looking across the adjacent road one could see the house where General Aviation President Joe Culler, and his brother Eddie—a 40-year veteran with the company—were raised.

Over three hundred guests mingled around new aircraft displays that included the Beech King Air 300, the Cheyenne 400LS, the Beech Jet and a mock-up of the EFIS instrument panel designed for the Beech Starship I. Many who first worked with Piedmont founder T.H. Davis were present along with Piedmont President and Chief Executive Officer Bill Howard and other officers at the helm of the corporation today.

Looking at the video display of the Starship—a dynamic new 400-mph business turboprop of graphite/epoxy that can fly at 41,000 feet—Bill McGee, senior vice president-marketing, marveled at how far aviation had come since he started with Piedmont in 1947. His thoughts

were underscored by the words of the guest speakers that included the mayor of Winston-Salem, the airport director, and Joe Culler.

Piedmont founder, T.H. Davis, was seated in the audience next to Dick Henson, president of Piedmont's regional airline. Both were beaming.

Howard, whose background is also rooted in general aviation, spoke of the importance of remembering aviation's past while looking to its bright future:

*The men and women who flew in those days are probably too frequently pictured as leather-helmeted, silk-scarfed daredevils. And I suspect one of the reasons that image lives yet is because they sort of liked it. And they did dare and risked much to get aviation through its infancy. But it wasn't so much their daring as their farsightedness, their desire to reach into a future even they couldn't fully see, which perhaps set them apart.*

*I also suspect that their vision was more useful than their tools. There were no computers or exotic alloys to help them build aircraft or simulators to help them learn to fly them. Yet they got the job done and did it with some flying machines that we all love to recall even today. We owe them much.*

*And I cannot think of a better way to honor these memories than to dedicate them to a building such as this. It is a fitting home for today's sophisticated aircraft. It says to the world that aviation has taken its place among America's major industries.*

Today Piedmont's general aviation division has fixed base operations in four locations plus fully owned subsidiaries including Air Service, Inc.,



Above: President Bill Howard and his wife Jan take part in the ribbon-cutting ceremony with GAG President Joe Culler. Left: T.H. Davis, Piedmont's founder, was on hand for the dedication.



in Greensboro, and Aviation Supply Corporation, a wholesale aircraft parts division with 14 locations throughout the country. The group exceeded over \$100 million in revenues last year.



Left: Airport Development Director Ken Jacobsen and Station Manager Tom Maynard congratulate each other after the ribbon-cutting at West Palm Beach as MIA-based flight attendants Dawn Tomlinson (left) and Sabrina Kirkland wave the banner. Below: Agent Jacquie Passman checks in passengers for the inaugural flight. PBI joined The Piedmont Shuttle on January 15 with two nonstop, round-trip flights daily to MCO.



Above: ATL-based flight attendants Diane Raab and Brenda Long, and Bruce Parrish (right), staff vice president-facilities, hold the ribbon as Pensacola dignitaries do the honors. Right: Reporters from several television stations and newspapers were on hand for the inaugural flight January 15. With the addition of PNS and PBI, Piedmont now serves 12 Florida cities and offers almost 100 intrastate flights daily as part of The Piedmont Shuttle.

