

A Visit to the World of Space Control

McAlphin Details Dept. Operations

Maintaining records of sales and cancellations, setting up extra flight sections, and advising stations of the availability of space for sale changes are just a few of the functions of Pied-

mont's Space Control. In an article written for The Piedmonitor, Space Control Manager Bob McAlphin outlined a number of the duties of his office.

Says Bob, "Space Control responsibilities are to the entire airline, not just to a particular station or office. We endeavor to make the best decision possible pertinent to the airline as a

whole. Some of the decisions out of this office mean the difference between getting much additional revenue for Piedmont or none at all.

"Sometimes one of the stations will cancel a reservation and notify us to confirm one of their wait-list, when actually we confirm another wait-list to a down-line or up-line station enabling us to gain additional revenue. This is why we have always stressed the importance of cancelling your reservations to us, and letting us do the confirming rather than confirming your own wait-list."

Reservation Steps

Confirming reservations and setting up extra sections involve many steps. In outlining these procedures McAlphin says, "Here in the Space Control office we have four Teletype receiving machines, one from each circuit. Contrary to what many people believe, we do not send our own teletype messages. This is handled by the Communications Department which is located next door.

"Our teletype traffic is torn from the machines and separated into current and future. The current is handled by our current board operator who also works the traffic dispatches. Flights are adjusted each time there is a booking or cancellation message. As seats become available from cancellations or no-shows they are immediately confirmed to the stations.

"Receipt of the traffic dispatches on time gives us and the Dispatcher's Office a complete picture of the flights all over the system.

"Future traffic is handled by our Reservation Agents, who also handle local reservations for Winston-Salem and vicinity.

"In addition to our regular reservation table, we have a small shelved case with 30 clipboards attached. These are dated one through 30—one for each day of the month—and contain a chart for each flight operating that day.

Charts Checked

"A continual check is made of these charts to determine the status of flights. If conditions warrant, a request or wait-list message is sent to curtail sales so that we won't have more passengers than we can take care of between any two points. We have found since the initiation of the seat allocation procedure that knowing when to call a flight in is of prime importance."

In setting up an extra flight section, Bob states that "A lot of planning and forethought is done before the final decision is made to set up an extra section.

Extra Section

"First, we have to make sure there is a sufficient number of passengers to warrant an extra section. After the decision is made, we then check with Inspection to see if an extra airplane is available. After the aircraft has been obtained, the parties concerned are notified so that the crew and other coordinated factors can be set up.

"After all this has been accomplished it is then up to the station concerned to follow through on each reservation to assure success of the extra section and the regular flight."

Keeping tabs on passenger space is a complicated business. One of the main reasons Space Control operates with a minimum of snarls is the staff, composed of Betty Hunter, Betty Sugg, Ina Grant, Franklin Scott, LaVerne Rehder, Sara Kelly, and



LOCAL RESERVATIONS are made from this area. Ina Grant makes a reservation for a Winston-Salem customer. Other Agents not on duty when photographs were taken include Franklin Scott, Betty Sugg, and Sara Kelly.

headed by Bob McAlphin.

Space Control Staff

The average seniority in the office runs almost eight years per Agent. Betty Hunter is the senior employee in Space Control, having joined Piedmont in 1948. She is a native of Cordova, Ala., attended high school in that city, and later received an A.B. degree from Duke University.

Betty Sugg joined Piedmont's Accounting Department in 1949, later transferring to her present office. She's from Winston-Salem and is married to First Officer Gene Sugg.

Ina Grant is also from Winston-Salem, and came with Piedmont in 1952. Ina is Space Control's bowling enthusiast; she and her husband are both members of a Friday night bowling league.

Lead Agent Franklin Scott began his career with Piedmont in 1952 at Norfolk. Frank, who lists hunting as his chief hobby, has been with Space Control for two years.

LaVerne Rehder started with Piedmont at Knoxville, Tenn., transferring to Space Control in March, 1957. She's well qualified for aviation work, being the first woman in North Carolina to solo and the second to obtain her private flying license.

Sara Kelly attended school in her hometown of Salisbury,

N. C., and joined the company in 1955. She's done quite a bit of traveling since then and plans a trip to Europe this summer.

Space Control's Manager, Bob McAlphin, started his airline career at the National School of Aeronautics, Kansas City, Mo. After graduation he served with Delta Airlines before joining Piedmont's Charlotte office. He was transferred to his present post in August, 1960. Says Bob, "My association with Piedmont has been wonderful, especially with its employees. My blessings in life have been many, with special emphasis on my wife and three small children."

As a parting word, Bob had this to say: "The Space Control office is only as good as the station personnel make it. Without their cooperation it is impossible to maintain full control of seats, and without full control of seats we have ineffectiveness spread over many parts of the system.

"I hope I have answered some of the questions that are asked from time to time about our office. Many things have been left out but I believe the most important phases have been covered. If any of the personnel would like additional information, please write or come to see us.

"I know of no other business where cooperation and coordination among the company employees is as essential as it is in the airline business."



PROCESS BEGINS at Teletype machines. Bob McAlphin tears off message at Space Control Teletype. The machines are for receiving only. Messages are sent through Communications Department next door. Both offices are located at INT Smith Reynolds Airport. Piedmont visitors are invited up at any time. Says Bob, "We welcome and are delighted to receive Piedmont personnel from the stations. In fact, I would encourage you to visit this office, because I have found from experience that a visit between mutual offices can certainly bring about better relationships."



FUTURE MESSAGES are distributed and handled from this section of the office. Betty Hunter is shown keeping tabs on available space.



CURRENT BOARD and traffic dispatches are handled from above center. LaVerne Rehder checks operations of flights for current day. Constant check is made on each flight from start to finish.