

# Colorful, profitable contributions from GAD

The General Aviation Division is a plane-selling, award-winning, profit-making part of Piedmont. This, the Beechcraft area of the Company's operation, is another of the not-so-familiar businesses that make up Piedmont Aviation, Inc.

Even though Piedmont has been in the general aviation business since 1941 it wasn't until 1955 that the Company became a Beechcraft distributor.

But a little of that early history is enlightening.

Senior Vice President R. S. Northington, who is head of the General Aviation Division, had received his flight training at Piedmont during World War II. He came back to the Company as sales manager after the war and didn't wait long to start making headlines.

In 1947 the Winston-Salem paper featured a story that started "The time has passed when everybody talks about the weather and no one does anything about it — at least in Forsyth County."

It seems that Piedmont's Northington had taken up rain making! Under his direction, pilots Charlie Vestal and John Wilkes had taken off in a 5 place Cessna (ante-Beech) loaded with 100 pounds of dry ice. They seeded the clouds and made rain so successfully that the plane flew through showers as it was coming back in to land. And there was nothing parched about the praise for Piedmont and Northington that appeared in papers all over the Southeast.

The General Aviation Division may not have continued along as colorful a path but its success has been no less spectacular.

There were some dry, lean years to follow and during many of them the General Aviation Division was Piedmont's better half. Long before the airline saw black ink on the books profit was a way of life for Northington and his men.

In building one of the largest and most efficient fixed base operations in the Southeast Northington has had good people working with him. C. W. Gough, who is Assistant Vice President and Johnny Johnson, Parts Manager, have been with Piedmont over 30 years and the Beech operation will be only 20 years old next May. Service Manager Eddie Culler and Aircraft Sales Manager Joe Culler have also been vital members of Northington's team. It is also interesting to note that the average length of service of the shop men is something over 15 years.

With headquarters in Winston-Salem and branch operations in Norfolk, Roanoke and Alexandria Piedmont's General Aviation Division is widely recognized and repeatedly awarded as an outstanding FBO. The Aircraft Power Reporter recently said, "this company has the most modern and most completely equipped engine, propeller, aircraft and electronics overhaul and repair station that can be found".

The GAD has two full time parts salesmen on the road, or in the air, all the time. They call on every airport with an FBO over a five state area. The GAD holds distributorships for parts and accessories of more than 50 nationally known manufacturers.

The 12,000 square foot parts department keeps four men on the phones filling parts orders day in and day out. According to Johnson something over 90 percent of these orders taken are immediately shippable from stock and go out of Winston-Salem the same day.

Besides selling a lot of parts, accessories and airplanes the GAD does a thriving business in charters.

Not only does the General Aviation Division do a volume business they also have a fantastic record of customer loyalty. This is true in their maintenance area and in the aircraft sales section.

Experienced manpower has paid off. The GAD's reputation has brought jobs from as far away as Africa and Australia. And they have been well rewarded for their efforts.

Among the most recent recognitions for the General Aviation Division was the Beechcraft Award of Excellence for 1974 presented to Northington by Mrs. Beech for retail sales in excess of \$6.7 million. Another award from Beech was given to Norfolk salesman Tom Grubaugh for having sold the most light aircraft of any Beech center in the United States.

Northington was honored recently when he was elected to the Board of Directors of the



In November Senior Vice President Bob Northington received the 1974 Beechcraft Award of Excellence from Mrs. O. A. Beech.

National Business Aircraft Association, Inc. He will serve a two year term as an associate member advisor on the NBAA Board.

As 1974 comes to an end it looks like the General Aviation Division will have had another record-breaking year, in terms of planes sold, awards won and profits made.

Piedmont Fabricators, which is the manufacturing area of the Company's operation, will be the fourth feature in this Piedmonitor series about the not-so-familiar businesses that make-up Piedmont Aviation, Inc.



C. W. Gough, right, accepted the 1973 Aviation Maintenance Facility Award from Jim Kost of Aviation Mechanics Journal. The prestigious award is the highest level of achievement an aviation maintenance facility can obtain.



## 1975 Holiday Schedule

The following is the official holiday schedule for all ground personnel:

- New Year's Day—  
January 1
- Easter Monday—  
March 31 (Winston-Salem only)
- Memorial Day—  
May 26 (everywhere except Winston-Salem)
- Independence Day—  
July 4
- Labor Day—  
September 1
- Thanksgiving—  
November 27
- Day following Thanksgiving—  
November 28
- Christmas Day—  
December 25
- Your employment anniversary date—  
Your birthday
- One day consecutive with your birthday.