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# PIEDMONITOR

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

## We're all the way to LA!

Piedmont's Flight Number 3 had been in the air almost five hours and was 15 miles from the Los Angeles Airport when the control center handed the 727 over to the tower.

"Welcome to LA!" the controller said enthusiastically. Flight 3 was just minutes away from making history as Piedmont's first nonstop, transcontinental service.

"It was quite an experience," Jim Combs, captain of the first flight, said.

"I didn't realize the impact we would have, the excitement that our first flight would generate. I'm just glad I was able to be part of the experience."

Combs, along with First Officer Bobby Leach and Second Officer James Nichols, set the 727 down on California soil at 10:10 a.m. On board were 103 passengers including a group of 30 from Fort Wayne, and GSO-based flight attendants Patty Mabe, Bob Henz, Nancy Nuckles, and Tiara Roberts.

"It was really exciting," Roberts, who has been part of a special task force that planned our new first-class service, said.

"I wanted to see if the procedures we outlined would really work. We've had to make a lot of changes already, and on the way out had to improvise, but we got a lot of compliments on our service."

The night before the first flight, Roberts stayed up late working out the procedures on the modified aircraft. She was excited but apprehensive. Would it work?

"Maintenance did a super job," Roberts said. "I don't know where they found 36 hours a day to get the plane ready, but I'm sure glad that they did."

Combs echoed her sentiments. "The plane looked really good," he said. "Maintenance did a fantastic job. In fact, everyone in the company pitched in together to make things work. It was a joint venture of all departments, and I think that's what makes Piedmont great."

Leon Fox and his wife were among the passengers on Flight 3.



GSO-based flight attendants Jeanne Donnell, Debbie Ashley, Betty Ann Stone, and Kay Craver are ready to pop the cork on a

bottle of champagne to serve passengers on Flight 1's inaugural trip April 1.

Fox, who retired from Piedmont in 1978 with 31 years in the cockpit, piloted Piedmont's very first flight on February 20, 1948. When the aircraft arrived in Los Angeles, he and retired Piedmont Founder T.H. Davis, who flew in from Charlotte, cut the ribbon for the inaugural flight from Los Angeles.

But the celebration began long before the champagne was uncorked for passengers on Flight 3. Early that morning, mayors,

chamber of commerce officials and other representatives from the eight midwest cities we serve plus our station managers flew into Dayton to be part of the festivities surrounding the historic flight.

Following a brief ceremony sending the plane on its way, approximately 100 people gathered at the Dayton Country Club where Leonard Martin, vice president-passenger services, and Don McGuire, staff vice president-

public affairs, announced new service planned for the hub. Among the dignitaries present were 30 Kalamazoo residents who had come to hear Piedmont announce that service would soon begin to their community.

"Everything went like clockwork," Martin said of the day's events. "Our station managers and sales people did an outstanding job helping to organize all the festivities. And our station personnel really handled the flights well."

At Charlotte, similar events took place but the numbers tripled. Some 300 people — representatives from 25 cities that feed into the early morning complex as well as dignitaries from Charlotte — joined together to send off the first Los Angeles flight.

Ten minutes before the 9 a.m. departure, the crowd moved to a roped-off area on the ramp. President Bill Howard, Charlotte Airport Manager Josh Birmingham, Winston-Salem Mayor Wayne Corpening, and Robert Shipp from the Wilmington Airport Commission donned Piedmont caps and helped load luggage onto the aircraft. Dozens of representatives from the news media including numerous television crews who had flown in for the event filmed all the activities.

From the cockpit, Captain Bill Kyle waved to the crowd. Then amid

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Flight 3 taxis to its gate at the Los Angeles International Airport, making history as Piedmont's first transcontinental service. A local television station recorded the event for the evening news.

