

F28 Goes on System With New LEX-ORD Route

Jay Selman, a station agent at EWR, was on the F28's inaugural flight on April 1. He took these photos for the Piedmonitor and gave us the following account of his trip.

Good things often come in small packages, and that's what the F28, the newest member of Piedmont's fleet, is out to prove.

At 7:10 a.m. on April 1, Flight 701, under the command of ROA-based pilot John Cox and Jim Sifford, director-flight standards, INT, lifted off the runway at ROA's Woodrum Field to usher in a new era for Piedmont. Piedmont's first Fokker F28 was airborne, bound for Lexington, Ky.

"The F28 is just what we've needed," LEX Station Manager A.B. Casey said. Casey is particularly excited about the F28 because on April 1, daily departures at LEX jumped from two to six.

"Not only are we introducing a new aircraft, we're also kicking off new nonstop service from Lexington to Chicago," he said. "We now offer the only nonstops in this market, and our folks are quite excited about that."

Cox and Sifford, the aircraft's pilots, both pointed out that on routes served by both the F28 and the B-737, the block time for the F28 is actually a few minutes shorter.

"The F28 is designed for maxi-

mum fuel efficiency at a lower altitude and allows the flight crews to shave off a few corners here and there," Cox said.

"I think it's going to be a good aircraft for us," Sifford added.

Both the F28's cockpit and passenger cabin look brand-new. The interiors are being completely remanufactured by Fokker Aircraft in Holland prior to delivery to Piedmont. We are receiving full support services from Fokker comparable to the purchase of new aircraft. By the end of the year, we will have 12 F28s in our fleet, and we have an option on eight more.

"The only way I could tell that this aircraft is smaller than the 737 is because it looks shorter," one passenger remarked. "Yet it's every bit as comfortable as the bigger planes."

The 65-passenger twin-jets will enable Piedmont to continue all-jet service to smaller communities on Piedmont's system, and free our B-737 112-passenger twin-jets now serving smaller markets for development of high density routes.

ROA-based flight attendants Jo Ann Gilbert and Nancy Gillespie were both caught up in the excitement of the inaugural.

"We're back to the days of two flight attendants, which many of us enjoy," Gilbert said.

"Even if we are full, we have only 32 and a half passengers per flight

attendant. Compare that to a 164-seat 727 worked by four flight attendants. Not only is it a lighter actual work load, but we'll be able to provide more individual attention and really get to know our regular customers," she said.

"On the F28, we'll be able to show that 'We Care' even more."

Alan Kirk, ROA-based flight attendant base manager, spent the entire day riding on the F28.

"With a new plane, there is a certain amount of unfamiliarity and 'debugging' that we have to go through. Some things simply can't be anticipated, and I want to be on board to help, and also to gather comments and suggestions to pass on to the home office," he said.

"It won't take long to have the F28 running as smoothly as the Boeing aircraft, especially with motivated flight attendants like Jo Ann and Nancy."

On its first day of scheduled service, the F28 also flew to ORD, TRI, GSO, PIT, ATL, and CRW. At Piedmont's smaller stations, the consensus is the same: the F28 is the key to their future.

Casey put it well when he said, "Without the F28, Piedmont at Lexington might well have been history some day. Now I think we will begin to grow again, to make the Piedmont presence at Lexington known."



Pete Perlman (right), the first passenger to check in on April 1 for Flight 701 from LEX to ORD, holds the ribbon while James Brough, LEX airport manager, Jess Coy, Piedmont supervisor, and A.B. Casey, LEX station manager, do the honors.

Captain Jim Sifford (left), director-flight standards, INT, and Captain John Cox, ROA, manned the cockpit on the F28's inaugural flight.



ROA-based flight attendants Nancy Gillespie and Ann Gilbert prepare coffee for passengers on the first flight.

PI to add Kalamazoo June 1

Kalamazoo, Michigan, will become the 63rd destination on Piedmont's system when it is linked to the Dayton complex on June 1.

Piedmont will begin service to Kalamazoo (AZO) with three non-stop, round-trip flights daily to DAY and one-stop or quick connections service to DCA, EWR, LGA, MCO, TPA, MIA, PHL, BOS, DFW, and LAX.

The announcement was made Sunday, April 1, at a news conference in Dayton following the departure of our inaugural flight to Los Angeles.

The Kalamazoo County Airport is currently served by Republic Airlines and two commuter carriers, Simmons Airlines and Allegheny Commuter Airlines.

Michael Stampfler, airport director, said that with Piedmont, the airport would be home to four airlines offering "the best service we've ever had."

Kalamazoo, population 213,000,

is located halfway between Chicago and Detroit. It is home for Western Michigan University (WMU) as well as two colleges, a community college and a business school. Major industry in the area includes Eckrich & Sons, a division of Beatrice Foods; James River Corporation, Georgia Pacific, and the Allied Paper Division of SCM Corporation, all paper manufacturers; The Upjohn Company, world leader in pharmaceuticals and chemicals; National Waterlift Division of the Pneumo Corporation, manufacturers of missile components; and the Stryker Corporation, originators and manufacturers of innovative orthopedic beds and equipment.

Kalamazoo will be the fifth Michigan destination served by Piedmont. In the past 18 months, we have added service to GRR, LAN, FNT, and DTW.



Bethune

Bethune named head Of Operations and Maintenance

Gordon M. Bethune has joined Piedmont as senior vice president-operations and maintenance.

Bethune, 42, previously worked for Western Airlines as vice president-maintenance and engineering, and, before joining Western, held a similar position for Braniff Airways. He has served as an aviation maintenance officer in the U.S. Navy and is a Vietnam veteran.

A native of San Antonio, Texas, Bethune is a graduate of Abilene Christian University. He is a licensed pilot and licensed airframe and powerplant mechanic.

