

around the industry

Many mergers have taken place over the past two years, but the number of U.S. carriers is still more than double the number that existed when deregulation of the airline industry took effect nine years ago. A chart featured in a recent issue of *Airline Business* magazine illustrates that in October 1978 there were 36 U.S. carriers with Section 401 certificates. This year, even after many mergers and acquisitions including the Piedmont/USAir merger, that figure totals 78.

Eastern is turning its hourly shuttle between LGA and both BOS and DCA into an autonomous division with its own budget, work force, fleet and management. According to an Eastern spokesperson, the move was made to turn the shuttle, one of Eastern's more profitable operations, into an airline within an airline to improve its performance and its ability to compete.

Milwaukee-based Midwest Express Airlines announced recently a \$120 million growth plan that includes increasing its fleet from five to 17 aircraft over the next five years, adding two new routes next March as part of an expansion of service, and beginning construction next year of a hangar and maintenance facility at General Mitchell Airport.

Domestic airline passenger traffic rose 5.3 percent in October compared with the same month a year ago and was up 9.1 percent for the first 10 months of 1987. At the same time, consumer complaints fell during the month of October. Complaints in October declined 36 percent from the month of September and were 50 percent below the August total.

DEN is now offering a toll-free telephone information service to allow travelers to obtain information on airport weather and facilities, airline schedules and telephone numbers, and ski conditions, as well as enable callers to page travelers at Stapleton. The new service is being offered to make "the Denver airport experience as hassle-free as possible." The number—1/800/AIR-2-DEN.

Australia has become the second country in the world to ban smoking on its domestic flights. Effective December 1, smoking is prohibited on all domestic flights in Australia. The ban applies to passenger cabins and crew compartments, and anyone violating the ban will be fined \$500 (Australian).

By the middle of 1988, United plans to have nearly 100 daily departures at Washington Dulles. The airline currently has 90 daily flights compared to 15 two years ago.

Pan Am will begin the first-ever nonstop Boeing 747 service between Orlando and Frankfurt, West Germany, on April 3.

TWA and the Chase Manhattan Bank have introduced a TWA Visa card that earns bonus miles plus other amenities for the carrier's frequent flyers.

Continental began nonstop service between Newark and both Daytona Beach and Melbourne, FL, on December 17.

Jim Burnley has been sworn in as the secretary of the Department of Transportation.

up for discussion

Have a question about Piedmont? This column, "up for discussion," gives you an opportunity to ask questions about your Company.

All questions must be signed and include your name, title, and location. Your name will be withheld from publication and will not be revealed when your question is sent to the proper department for an answer. Unsigned questions will be automatically discarded.

When related questions are received, they will be consolidated and answered as one question. As many questions and answers as space allows will appear each month in "up for discussion."

Send your questions to *Piedmonitor* Editor, H440, or One Piedmont Plaza, Winston-Salem, NC 27156-1000.

Q. Why hasn't the Marketing Department connected the Syracuse and Dayton hubs with either direct or nonstop service to open a west-bound gateway for passengers in the Northeast?

A. Our research indicates that traffic between Syracuse and Dayton would be very thin. Flights would operate with marginal loads at best. For these reasons, start-up service in this market gets a low priority and will be considered at a later date.

Bob McAlphin
vice president-airline scheduling

Q. I would like to make a suggestion that I feel would further enhance the message across America, that Piedmont is the Airline that Cares.

Every evening while accomplishing checks upon our aircraft, I frequently find numerous name identification tags that are provided with designer-type luggage. These tags are currently discarded as garbage.

My suggestion is as follows: Simply place the lost tags into an envelope and return them to their original owners. Quite often, the tag is somewhat torn or mutilated. It would behoove Piedmont to furnish the passenger with a new tag holder with the Piedmont logo, of course. This new holder or their old undamaged holder accompanied with a "Thanks for Flying Piedmont" letter would definitely leave a lasting impression. If one passenger chooses Piedmont again simply because their tag was returned, then this little effort was worth the time, trouble and expense. Expenses should be minimal, 22 cents for the stamp, bulk rate prices on inexpensive Piedmont tag holders, pennies for the envelope, and addresses are supplied for future mailing lists.

A. What a good idea! And it would certainly "enhance the message across America, that Piedmont is the airline that cares."

There are a number of questions, however, associated with this such as potential cost, personnel time involved, and volume. We believe it to be large numbers but perhaps worth the cost and effort. We will pursue this suggestion with the hopes of implementing it. As soon as we have the question resolved, we will decide and let you know the answer.

Don Shanks
vice president-customer relations

Q. A newly emerging employee benefit concerns not only each employee's medical health but also his or her mental health. Known under various names—i.e., employee assistance plan and health counseling—these plans deal with employee emotional problems, stress, marital problems, and job-related conflicts, among other psychological problems. Does Piedmont/USAir offer a similar program or plan to in the near future?

A. USAir currently offers an employee assistance program which has the following objectives:

1. Encourage employees with work-related problems to seek help through the Company's program.
2. Refer employees to appropriate assistance resources.
3. Restore employee productivity and health.
4. Retain valued employees.

We are currently reviewing the entire EAP policy and upon operational integration with USAir, this program will be implemented and fully communicated to all employees.

Dave Workman
vice president-human resources

Q. It is my understanding that the parents of USAir employees are permitted to fly on a space available basis for a nominal yearly service charge. Now that we are owned by USAir, how soon will parents become eligible for these same benefits?

Q. What exactly are USAir's nonrevenue pass policies currently? How do they compare to our pass privileges here at Piedmont? And what, if any, changes to either company's pass programs are being studied for the post merger airline?

A. At this point, no decisions have been made on the pass policies for the combined airline. Currently, USAir has a liberal pass policy which includes employee, spouse, dependent minor children, and parents of the employee as eligible for nonrevenue passes. The airline does not offer reduced rate for in-laws. There are two procedures for obtaining passes. Employees can purchase a travel authority card annually for a nominal fee based on the number of eligible family members or elect instead to pay a small service charge for each trip pass issued. Both Piedmont's and USAir's policies are currently under review, and as new decisions are made, we will keep you informed. We expect a more liberal exchange of passes between Piedmont and USAir to take place prior to the operational merger in early 1989.

Faye Scott McIntyre
manager-pass bureau