



Retired Captains Leon Fox (on steps) and "Hoss" Dobbins, who piloted Piedmont's first flight 40 years ago, were just two of the hundreds of employees who were on hand February 20 at Wilmington to celebrate the airline's 40th birthday. For more photos of the day's festivities, turn to page 7.

USAir orders 50 Boeing 737 jets

On March 3, USAir announced an order for 50 Boeing 737 aircraft and options on 30 more. If all the options are exercised, the value to the total transaction will be approximately \$2.5 billion.

USAir Chairman and President Edwin I. Colodny said "that the order is indicative of the health and vitality of USAir. Our track record made it possible to order these new aircraft which will benefit our passengers and the communities we serve."

Of the 50 orders, 20 are for the popular Series 300 model. The remaining 30 orders will include more Series 300s or a combination of Series 300s, 400s, or 500s. Selection by USAir of specific models included in the 30 options will also be made later. Delivery of the 50 aircraft will begin in April 1989 and will be completed by December 1991.

Cumulatively, the airlines of USAir Group have the largest 737 fleet in the world, totaling 167 aircraft. In addition to its current fleet of 23 120-seat Series 200s, USAir operates 42 Series 300s with orders on six more aircraft. Piedmont operates 39 Series 300s and 62 Series 200s. Piedmont was the launch customer for the Series 400, first of which is to be delivered in September 1988. Piedmont has placed firm orders for 20 Series 400s. Piedmont also has orders for eight Series 300s for delivery by August 1988.

Selected to power the newly-ordered 737-300s

is the CFM International, Inc. CFM56-3-B2 engine, identical to those on the current fleet of USAir 737-300s. The Series 400, which can accommodate 156 passengers in a single-class configuration, is Boeing's newest version of the 737 family of aircraft. It is scheduled for certification by the FAA in September 1988. The series 500 is a smaller version and is scheduled for late 1989 roll-out and certification.

Did you know?

The best-selling commercial jet in history, Boeing's 737, celebrated its 20th anniversary of passenger service February 10. The original twinjet, which made the first revenue flight in Germany for Lufthansa, is still operating daily as the flagship of Ansett New Zealand, a regional carrier based in Auckland. Currently, 1,466 Boeing 737s are operating in nearly every country of the world, and Boeing anticipates its 2,000th order by mid-year 1988. By year-end 1988, USAir and Piedmont are projected to operate a combined total of 189 737's.

PIEDMONT

Volume 39, number 2

March 1988

'800' line draws 1,300 questions

There are lots of questions to be answered in putting together a merger of two airlines as large as Piedmont and USAir. Not surprisingly, many of the questions are from employees.

What color will the aircraft be?

I was in reservations as a part-time agent for three years, then full-time for five years. How much seniority will I have in this classification?

My daughter is beginning orthodontic treatment. It will last over a year. Does USAir have dental insurance to cover this? If part of the work is done now, and part after the merger, who will pay?

These questions, and 1,300 more much like them, came flooding in when an "800" number for use by interested Piedmont employees went into service at INTRO on February 15. The questions, and the volume of questions asked, are probably a story in themselves. But, how the line came to exist and how the questions are answered are equally interesting tales.

"In January it became increasingly obvious that our employees were growing concerned about the merger," David Workman, vice president-human resources, said. "It probably had more to do with the fact that some other airline mergers, most notably those at Texas Air Corporation, had been beset with many problems, and that large numbers of workers had suffered badly. We felt our personnel needed an opportunity to ventilate these concerns and, in turn, we needed a vehicle that clearly demonstrated that their concerns were not only being heard, but also being addressed."

Chairman Bill McGee assigned to Human Resources and Public Affairs the responsibility of setting up such a program.



Seven of the 39 reservationists assigned to record the incoming questions on the "800" number are (l to r) Betsy Butner, Runella Hayes, Alinda Owens, Jean Jones, Brenda Smoot, Judy Parker, and Barbara Gwyn.

Representatives of these departments, along with communications and reservations, met to explore alternatives.

It first became clear that the quickest and most economic employee "feedback" system would be telephone lines. The system also had to be operated without a financial burden on the concerned employees.

The solution: A toll-free 800 WATS number reachable from any location on the domestic Piedmont system.

Dohn Kivett, manager-voice network, computer and communications services, quickly arranged for eight such lines into INTRO. Four of the lines were dedicated to callers within the state of North Carolina, with the remainder serv-

ing the rest of the U.S. system. The lines were in place and ready on the announced February 15 startup date.

"We enjoy a talented pool of individuals skilled in telephone communications at our reservations office," Don Shanks, vice president-customer relations, said. "We felt they could best understand the issues our own employees would want to discuss and most accurately forward those questions to our corporate headquarters close by. We selected a very dedicated group of 39 reservationists and put them through a brief, but intensive, program to handle these calls."

Service pins for part-timers

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