

First-class conversion underway

Immediately following USAir's decision last May to convert its existing fleet to a first-class/coach configuration, the clock started ticking. Already, thousands of man-hours at both Piedmont and USAir have been spent designing and specifying new dual-class cabin arrangements for each fleet type. An equal amount of time has been spent coordinating contracts with suppliers to provide everything from aircraft seats to new galleys and lavatories in time for installation which began November 1, 1988.

In addition, every change planned among each fleet type has to be fully documented before the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) can award supplemental flight certificates authorizing the changes. According to Garner Miller, USAir senior vice president-maintenance and engineering, this tedious but essential part of the process is an enormous task.

"The engineering effort that has gone into redesigning the B737-300 galleys already has consumed over 500 man-hours," he said. "And in developing the documentation with the FAA, engineers have spent 1,800 man-hours—that's more than one man-year—for this project."

A cabin standardization project, which will provide for common service for the entire combined fleet, will be accomplished during this period as well, according to Miller.



F28-1000—20 aircraft
4 first class/59 coach
Conversion period 1/89-2/89
F28-4000—25 aircraft
4 first class/64 coach
Conversion period 2/89-4/89



B767-200—cross aisles will be added.
210-passenger configuration will be maintained.



B727-200—44 aircraft
8 first class/143 coach
Conversion period 3/89-4/89



BAE-146—20 aircraft
4 first class/77 coach
Conversion period 2/89-4/89

Subsequently, the first-class conversion and cabin standardization have been combined into a single program.

Despite all of the complex scheduling and months of lead time planning and preparation, the actual physical installation began on schedule on November 1 with the first two fleet types, the MD-80 and the B737-300.

Miller said that due to the larger number of B737-300s, 53 aircraft, this conversion will be the most difficult and the most expensive to accomplish. In fact, the November start-up date and the deadline of July 1989 for total fleet type conversion are the key dates around which most all other work has been scheduled to be conducted.

All the other conversions will occur between November and July, with the exception of the MD-80, which will be converted to a first-class interim configuration between November and mid-December 1989, he said.

"The MD-80 is a bit complicated in that it will be done in two phases," he said. "Phase I in-



B737-400—8 first class/138 coach
To be delivered in dual-class configuration



DC-9—74 aircraft
4 first class/104 coach
Conversion period 2/89-4/89



B737-200—23 aircraft
8 first class/102 coach
Conversion period 6/89-7/89



B737-300—53 aircraft
8 first class/120 coach
Conversion period 11/88-6/89

cludes the conversion to eight in first class and 133 coach. Phase II, starting in December, will involve extensive cabin renovations which will be completed by February 1990."

Although all Piedmont fleet types are currently in dual-class configuration, certain fleet type configurations will be changed to be consistent with USAir's configurations. The first-class section of Piedmont's 20 F28-1000s and 25 F28-4000s will be converted from 8 to 4 seats. The B727-200s will be converted from 12 to 8 first-class seats. Additional coach seats will be added on the F28-1000s and B727-200s.

Total cost for the entire first-class conversion and cabin standardization program is about \$37 million.

Frequent Flyer Program revised

Revisions in Piedmont's Frequent Flyer Bonus Program became effective November 7, in anticipation of the early 1989 merger with USAir. The changes, which created a "mirror-image" with the USAir Frequent Traveler Program, included a simplification of the program's award structure, the addition of new international partners, and an ability to redeem awards on either of the two jet carriers of USAir Group.

Don Witte, director-marketing services, said that some of the major changes in the program included the following:

- Piedmont and USAir domestic awards are now interchangeable. Destinations and flight options are dramatically improved for passengers of both carriers. Bonus Program members are able to redeem mileage awards on either carrier.
- A free roundtrip ticket at the 20,000 mileage award level is now available for travel within the east or west coast markets. A roundtrip between any two points on the east coast requires only 20,000 miles, as opposed to the old award structure's 30,000-mile requirement.
- First-class upgrade at the 10,000-mile award level has been maintained. Piedmont Frequent Flyer Program members are able to upgrade from coach class to first class on Piedmont or USAir (which will initiate first-class service next year) for 10,000 miles.
- Additional international gateways and destinations with new airline tie-in partners Finnair, Hawaiian Airlines, Northwest, Philippine Air

Lines and UTA French Airlines are now available. Although Piedmont's tie-in with TWA will be discontinued December 1, 1989, the relationship with British Airways will continue with even more opportunities. For example, British Airways now offers mileage credits and award opportunities on all London Concorde trips, flights throughout Europe, and from the U.S. gateways of Chicago, Dallas/Ft. Worth, Houston, San Diego, Nassau and San Juan. Travel awards to destinations in the Orient, South Pacific, and Scandinavia are also available.

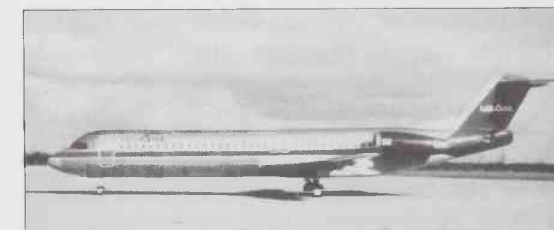
- Mileage minimums have been adjusted. As previously announced, mileage minimums for Piedmont, Henson, and Piedmont Commuter flights will be credited at the 750-mile level, and hotels and car rentals at 500 miles.

Program members also have the option of selecting awards from either the current roster of awards or the revised program for one year. After November 6, 1989, all awards will be distributed according to the current program rules.

Additionally, Piedmont Frequent Flyer Bonus Program members who travel in select U.S. markets on the combined Piedmont/USAir system between November 1, 1988, and January 31, 1989, will be awarded extra bonus miles: 1,000 miles for every flight into and out of Baltimore/Washington International Airport, Charlotte, Cleveland, Kansas City, and selected other cities (including flights on Piedmont Commuters at BWI and Charlotte).



MD-80—31 aircraft
Phase I: 8 first class/133 coach
Conversion period 11/1-12/15
Phase II: 8 first class/135 coach



F100—20 aircraft
4 first class/99 coach
To be delivered in dual-class configuration.