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Piedmont Aviation Plans New Facilities at City Airport

By Ann Corrigan
Staff Business Reporter

Piedmont Aviation Inc. will replace the outdated offices and hangars used by its general aviation division with a \$1.9 million headquarters and aircraft storage hangar at Smith Reynolds Airport here.

The construction announcement, which follows two months of other major capital announcements for Piedmont, is further evidence of the company's commitment to Winston-Salem, said William R. Howard, Piedmont's president and chief operating officer.

Piedmont Aviation, the parent company of the airline, began as an aircraft sales and service business in 1940.

The general aviation, or light aircraft, division sells and charters Beechcraft and Piper planes, offers pilot instruction, refueling and

maintenance services, does engine and propeller overhauling and sells aircraft parts.

"This expansion will help us to even better develop the tremendous potential of general aviation in this area," Howard said.

The Forsyth County Airport Commission has agreed to extend its lease with Piedmont so the company can expand.

The hangar and office building will be on the same site as the current offices, which were completed in 1961, and two hangars, one built in the early 1930s and the other in 1941.

Those buildings, which are on North Liberty Street near Akron Drive, will be torn down.

The headquarters building will have 14,400 square feet space, and it will contain the general administration offices, Beechcraft sales and charter departments, a flight planning room and space for expansion.

That building will be attached to the 27,600-square-foot hangar where 18 to 24 planes can be stored. The hangar will have electric doors, heating and storage for charter and demonstration aircraft.

A new parking lot will be built. While construction is under way, space in other hangars will be used.

Construction began this week and is scheduled for completion by Aug. 30, 1985.

Howard described the general aviation division as the most complete between Delaware and Florida.

The general aviation division earned nearly \$40 million in total revenues in 1983. The entire corporation earned about \$800 million, Howard said.

The division has 325 employees, about 175 of them in Winston-Salem. The division also

has operations in Roanoke and Norfolk, Va., and Monroe, N.C.

"We very much intend to remain in the general aviation division," Howard said.

The new buildings will allow the company to offer its customers up-to-date equipment and services, according to Joe H. Culler, president of the General Aviation Group.

The Federal Aviation Administration shows that Smith Reynolds Airport had 26,780 local general aviation flights in 1983, the second largest of any airport in North Carolina.

The Raleigh/Durham Airport had 971 more such flights, which are described as planes that depart and remain within 25 miles of an airport. Smith Reynolds also ranks fourth in the state in all general aviation flights.

The architect for the new hangar and headquarters is Hammill-Walter Associates Inc.,

and the builder is Fowler-Jones Construction Co.

This new construction announcement follows several others made by Piedmont this year.

In August, Piedmont announced plans for three projects: a \$3.3 million reservations center at Dayton International Airport in Dayton, Ohio.; an 81,000-square-foot building in Madison Park here to house \$6 million in computers for the reservations systems; and \$1 million in improvements to Piedmont's main reservations center on Griffith Road.

Last month, Piedmont said that it will spend \$6 million to expand its maintenance center at the Regional Airport in Greensboro.

Piedmont has at least 1,900 employees in Winston-Salem and more than 3,000 in Winston-Salem, Greensboro and High Point.