

# Laid-off North State workers getting help

A rapid-response team that includes Forsyth Technical Community College, HAECO Americas as well as state and local officials is now in the process of helping nearly 350 employees who will be laid off by North State Aviation in Winston-Salem find new positions as soon as possible.

Gary Green, president of Forsyth Technical Community College, told TBI that his college is working in tandem with N.C. Department of Commerce and local work force officials to assist the workers that are being let go after the firm lost business with its main client, United Airlines.

"Our priority right now is to see how we can assist in the transition for those 300-plus employees," Green said. "That is the overriding concern."

Meanwhile, Meryl Mullane, a spokeswoman for HAECO Americas, said the maintenance repair and overhaul company in Greensboro began conducting



COURTESY OF NORTH STATE AVIATION

Hundreds of North State Aviation workers gather in front of a United Airlines plane at the company's Smith Reynolds Airport facility in Winston-Salem. Many of North State Aviation's employees previously worked at Piedmont Airlines, a once dominant air carrier.

interviews with North State Aviation workers starting this week. North State Aviation is also working with a firm called Aeroteams in Greensboro to place the workers in new jobs.

The rapid-response team is assisting North State Aviation after there had been "a number of rumors that the firm's business volume was down somewhat," said Gayle Anderson, president and CEO of the Winston-Salem Chamber of Commerce.

"I know they had an interest in diversifying their client base, but they were so busy all of the time," Anderson said. "It was one of those unfortunate situations where they had all of their eggs in one basket and the basket changed."

Like Green, she believes that the workers won't have much trouble finding new aviation jobs in the area.

"They are dying for employees," Anderson said of other aviation employers. "We are very optimistic that a good number of these employees will find employment with other companies, if not here in Winston, certainly in the Greensboro area."