

Planning for the Future

Piedmont Says It'll Need Old Hangar and New One

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Piedmont Airline's planned construction of an \$11 million maintenance hangar at the Regional Airport will have minimal effect on Piedmont's existing hangar at the Smith Reynolds Airport here, airline officials said yesterday as plans for the project were announced.

"We are growing so rapidly, we will need both facilities," William R. Howard, Piedmont's president, said during an afternoon press conference at the Regional Airport. He explained that Piedmont will receive 22 new Boeing 737 jet aircraft over the next two years, as well as four 150-seat Boeing 727 trijet aircraft. "By the time this new hangar is completed, our present overhaul hangar facilities will not have the capacity to meet the needs of our new fleet," Howard said.

Some of the work and employees at the Winston-Salem hangar, which is adjacent to Piedmont's headquarters here, will be transferred to the new shop, Howard said. About 250 people will work at the hangar — and the number may eventually go as high as 400, he said — and the majority of them will be chosen from among the 650 maintenance employees in Winston-Salem.

"Most of those who transfer here will drive back and forth from their existing homes, so there is not a great trauma involved," Howard said.

The Winston-Salem

maintenance staff, however, will not be reduced by the move, he said, explaining that additional workers will be hired as work at both hangars expands along with Piedmont's growth.

The new hangar, which will accommodate as many as three 737s and one 150-seat Boeing 727 at one time, will be used for quarterly and annual maintenance service checks of aircraft. Brake overhaul, fabric, fiberglass and avionics shops also will be located there. The Winston-Salem hangar will be used primarily for day-to-day, routine maintenance as well as major overhauls of aircraft.

Howard said that Piedmont had studied other possible sites before selecting the location at the Regional Airport, which will be directly across from the new terminal now under construction. Other cities which had been considered as possible sites included Charlotte, Norfolk and Roanoke, Va.

One of the major reasons for the selection, he said, was Piedmont's heavy flight activity at the airport, where it now has 28 daily departures and keeps three aircraft overnight.

"The overnight status of aircraft facilitates rotating our fleet from maintenance cycles to schedule cycles without disruption of service," Howard said, adding that the number of jets which are parked there, overnight will increase in the future.

An aggressive selling job by the Regional Airport authority

was a second major reason for the decision, Howard added, mentioning "a lot of sales promotion" by Stanley Frank, chairman of the authority, and "cooperative and competitive efforts" by the entire airport authority.

Frank called the hangar "another major step forward in our development of the Regional Airport as a major aviation center offering a full range of services to the aviation industry and the traveling public. We believe we have concluded a favorable agreement for both the authority and Piedmont."

"We now enjoy the prospect of a major new terminal building, a major maintenance facility, an excellent on-site hotel recently announced by the Marriott Corp., and excellent air cargo facilities," Frank added. The total cost of new construction proposed or now under way for the airport totals about \$100 million.

The hangar, apron area and parking lot will occupy a 15-acre site on Radar Road, and Piedmont has an option to eventually expand to occupy a total of 40 acres there.

The prime location of the property and the large size of the parcel involved also were important to the final decision to locate the hangar there, J. David Reed, Piedmont's facilities coordinator, said.

"This is a good location, economically," Reed said. "Since it is directly across from the terminal, we can save a large amount of fuel simply not having to taxi the aircraft down the runway from the

hangar to the terminal all of the time. And also, the side facing the terminal is 30 feet tall, and it will be like a great big billboard for us, since it will have our name on it in giant letters."

The airport authority will arrange financing for the hangar, which it actually will own. Its costs, however, will be paid by Piedmont through its rental fees. Piedmont will pay about \$500,000 annually in rent, and its annual payroll will be more than \$6 million.

The hangar will have a work area, from floor to ceiling, that will be 44 feet high, 140 feet deep and 230 feet wide. A number of innovative energy saving ideas, including a light-reflective floor made of ground steel and concrete plus translucent hangar doors which will admit natural sunlight, have been incorporated into its design.

It also will have a 600,000 gallon deluge fire-fighting system which will be capable of pumping 7,500 gallons of water each minute for at least 1½ hours.

Grading work on the project is expected to begin by Aug. 1, and Piedmont hopes to occupy the hangar by April 1983.