

Airline May Announce Plan

By John Byrd

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American Airlines of Dallas is expected to announce today that it will begin service at the Greensboro-Winston-Salem-High Point Regional Airport this year.

The country's second-largest airline has scheduled a press conference at each of seven airports in the Carolinas for what it called an announcement "of great significance to the airport and the community."

Reports have circulated for weeks that American was planning to enter the Carolinas airline market, which it currently does not serve.

Aviation Daily, a trade publication, reported a month ago that American plans to add flights sometime this year at the Regional, Raleigh-Durham, Charlotte, and Fayetteville airports in North Carolina and at Greenville-Spartanburg, Columbia, and Charleston airports in South Carolina and at the Savannah airport in Georgia, where it already has some service.

Airport spokesmen at all the named North Carolina airports confirmed yesterday that American has scheduled press conferences there, but all said they do not know how many flights to which destinations it is planning.

American, based at the Ft. Worth-Dallas Airport, does most of its business at a hub there and one in Chicago.

According to industry sources, American probably will announce today that it will add flights in the Carolinas airports feeding those hubs, with most flights probably routed through Charlotte and Raleigh-Durham.

James Parker, a transportation analyst with the Robinson-Humphrey Co., a stock brokerage in Atlanta, said American's invasion of the Carolinas is not good news for Piedmont Airlines of Winston-Salem, the dominant carrier in the market. But Piedmont should be able to hold its own against the competitor, he said.