

N.C. Transportation Museum

News Release

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“Piedmonster” arrives at the N.C. Transportation Museum

SPENCER, N.C. — Thanks to a donation from the Piedmont Silver Eagles Charitable Funds, Inc. (PSECFI), the N. C. Transportation Museum (NCTM) has received the "Piedmonster" - a GAT 1 (General Aviation Trainer) simulator from the 1950s. Once restored, the "Piedmonster" will be a working airplane simulator housed in the “Wagons, Wheels and Wings” exhibit hall, and is sure to be a unique educational tool for children.

About six feet tall, the "Piedmonster" has a wing span of 12 feet. The pilot’s seat is just big enough for a child to sit in and operate. Restoration is currently taking place and includes work on the "Piedmonster's" electrical components, reassembly of the wings and housing, and addition of the Piedmont Airlines Speedbird logo to the "Piedmonster's" nose. The job is expected to be completed by the winter of 2006.

The word "Piedmonster" was a term applied to anyone who worked for Piedmont Airlines during its heyday, or became an enthusiast of Piedmont by reading about its rich history.

“‘Piedmonster’ is a play on words,” says Barbara Jamieson Adams, former Piedmont Airlines flight attendant of 35 years. “The pilots, flight attendants, employees and passengers of Piedmont Airlines were generally known for their good attitudes, and exuded personality and character.”

Former Piedmont Airlines Captain Stephanie Hamilton and the PSECFI agree on the name “Piedmonster” for the NCTM’s GAT 1 simulator because the museum actively tells the history of Piedmont Airlines through more than 500 Piedmont items it has collected. These items will be displayed in the Back Shop, an exhibit hall currently being restored that will feature a chronological history of transportation in North Carolina.

The N.C. Transportation Museum, located in historic Spencer Shops, the former Southern Railway repair facility for steam locomotives, is part of the Division of State Historic Sites, Department of Cultural Resources. For more information on the preservation of North Carolina’s arts, history and culture, visit www.ncculture.com

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The museum offers free admission and is conveniently located just a few minutes off I-85 at Exit 79 in Spencer, N.C., and about an hour from Charlotte, Greensboro or Winston-Salem.