that would happen quickly, saying, "I don't know of any aviation group with this level of experience handling Boeing 737 aircraft outside Flying." Creech said that reaching the workforce goal would depend on launching a charter-airline service, which could take more than a year to get FAA certification.

Creech and Russ Kosta, vice president of maintenance, stress that NS Aviation is not Pace rising from the ashes, even though both men were in management roles with Pace when it was owned by the estate of Bob Brooks, the chairman of Hooters of America Inc.

After their own offer for Pace was turned down, they were let go when William Rogers Sr. took over Pace in May 2006. Rogers' acquisition was based on a promissory note to pay $9 million for stock in Pace Airlines LLC and Pace Airlines II LLC and take over $6 million in liabilities.

Creech and Kosta said their departure, and then the collapse of Pace, fueled their desire to create their own maintenance company.

"For these hangars to sit empty for as long as they did, because of what happened here, was painful," Creech said. "When we were let go, Pace was crumbling off its best year."

Creech and Kosta said they understand why there are questions about their investor support because Rogers touted $32 million in backing he never had.

"Do you think the FAA would approve our certificate if it had doubts?" Creech asked.

The FAA certified NS Aviation as an aircraft repair station on Dec. 19, primarily to work on Boeing 737 airframes.

Keith Crisco, the state's Commerce secretary, confirmed that the N.C. Commerce Department "did a great deal of due diligence because of the collapse of Pace."

"There is a leap of faith that this management team can perform, which is why the grant is performance based," Creech said. "We're very impressed with their people, and we have confidence they will perform as promised."

Tom McKim, the chairman of the airport commission, said that the Golden Leaf money — which will go to buy equipment for NS Aviation — is an investment in this airport and community as much as the company.

"We're very optimistic about their ability to hand our business. We also know the reality is we didn't have a lot of people beating our doors down for the space," Kosta said.

Kota said that being turned down by the estate in 2009 proved fortuitous for NS Aviation because it can compete for new contracts without taking on Pace's debt.

"All the groundwork is now in place for this company to take off," Kosta said.

www.winstonjournal.com

FRIDAY, JANUARY 20, 2011 A3

Data may have gone to landfill

The Associated Press

RALEIGH — A state agency thinks computer disks with personal information have been sent to a landfill by mistake.

The News & Observer of Raleigh reported Thursday that the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services says the disks contained Social Security numbers, birth dates, income details and other personal information about more than 10,000 clients.

The disks had records of people who received hearing or speech aids or applied for other services from the Division of Services for the Deaf and the Hard of Hearing between 2005 and 2008.

David Jan Withers says the disks were probably taken to a landfill and probably destroyed. There's no indication anyone obtained the disks.