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at airport to expand Aviation

125 jobs in its first year It commits to creating at Smith Reynolds

BY RICHARD CRAVER Winston-Salem Journal

The management team of NS Aviation LLC winced Thursday when told that state and local officials said supporting their start-up aircraft-maintenance company was a "leap of faith."

However, the team — talking publicly about their plans for the first time — acknowledged that gaining confidence in their business operations and finances will be crucial to attracting customers, employees and community support

nity support.

NS Aviation confirmed it will expand at Smith Reynolds Airport, taking over the hangars and space used by the defunct Pace Airlines Inc.

The news was welcomed by Gov. Bev Perdue and local and state officials as a chance to put former Pace employees back to work and give the airport an anchor tenant. About 300 local Pace employees were let go when mismanagement led to the company's collapse in September 2009.

"This management team

"This management team knows this industry inside and out," Perdue said of executives who also worked as managers with Piedmont Airlines and US

Aliways Group Inc.

"They will do great things here, and they have the juice to become a major global player."

NS Aviation, which has 31 employees, has committed to creating 125 jobs in its first year of operations and 308 over four years. The jobs will pay an average wage of \$42,072—\$80 more than the average in Forsyth than the average in Forsyth County. It plans to spend nearly \$1.3 million on capital invest-

In return, the state made the company eligible for a \$300,000 grant from the One North Carolina Fund. It also will benefit

Airport

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that would happen quickly, saying, "I don't know of any aviation group with this level of experience handling Boeing 737 aircraft outside Boeing."

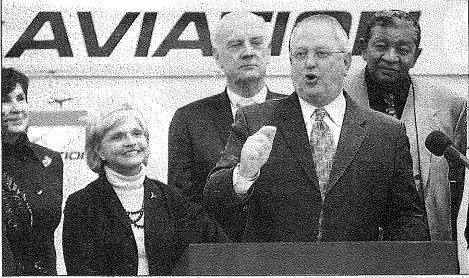
Creech said that reaching the work-force goal would depend on launching a charter-airline service, which could take more than a year to get FAA certification.

Creech and Russ Kota, its 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 Hooters of America Inc.

they were let go when William Rogers Sr. took over

"For these hangars to sit state and the Golden Leaf Keith Crisco, the state's Pace's debt.

"Grant Brown of St. Commerce secretary, con"All the grant of St. Commerce secretary, con"All the grant of St. Commerce secretary, con-Pace in May 2009. Rogers' empty for as long as they acquisition was based on a promissory note to pay \$9 pened here, was painful," lieve we had a solid inmerce Department "did a pany to take off," Kota says the disks were probably taken to a landfill and lines II LLC and take over ing off its best year." \$6 million in liabilities.



LAUREN CARROLL/JOURNA

Charlle Creech, foreground, speaks before officials including Gov. Bev Perdue at a news conference at Smith Revnolds Airport on Thursday.

Brooks, the chairman of their departure, and then are questions about their The FAA certified NS the collapse of Pace, fueled investor support because Aviation as an aircraft-re-After their own offer for their desire to create their Rogers touted \$32 million pair station on Dec. 13, Pace was turned down, own maintenance compa- in backing he never had.

Creech and Kota said they understand why there had doubts?"

think the FAA would ap- Pace." Creech and Kota said prove our certificate if it "There is a leap of faith

Pace in May 2009. Rogers' empty for as long as they Foundation would offer Commerce secretary, conmillion for stock in Pace Creech said. "When we vestment group behind great deal of due diligence said. Airlines LLC and Pace Air- were let go, Pace was com- us?" Kota asked. "Do you because of the collapse of

that this management team can perform, which is why the grant is performance based," Crisco 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 with personal information Golden Leaf money which will go to buy equip-ment for NS Aviation – "is by mistake. much as the company."

about their ability to land tained Social Security business. We also know numbers, birth dates, inthe reality is we didn't come details and other have a lot of people beat- personal information ing our doors down for the about more than 18,000 space."

Kota said that being turned down by the estate people who received hearin 2009 proved fortuitous ing or speech aids or apfor NS Aviation because it plied for other services primarily to work on Boe- can compete for new con- from the Division of Sertracts without taking on vices for the Deaf and the

"All the groundwork is

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Data may have gone to landfill

The Associated Press

have been sent to a landfill

The News & Observer of an investment in this air- Raleigh reported Thursday port and community as that the N.C. Department of Health and Human Ser-"We're very optimistic vices says the disks conclients.

The disks had records of Hard of Hearing between 2005 and 2008.

probably destroved. There's no indication anyone obtained the disks.

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