

Flying just for business

Air 1 looking to prosper

United Press International
ST. LOUIS — Despite the recession and the proliferation of discount air fares, officials of a new airline say they can prosper by offering the business traveler luxury accommodations at coach prices.

"This is what the business person has been wanting for a long time," said James C. Johnston, senior vice president of Air 1.

The new airline began scheduled flights April 1 from its home base of St. Louis to New York, Washington, Dallas-Fort

Worth and Kansas City, Mo. In keeping with its business orientation, Air 1 flies only on weekdays and Saturday mornings.

Each gray and white Boeing 727 used by Air 1 is outfitted with 80 leather-covered seats, compared with the 119 seats normally installed in the aircraft.

Blue-suited stewardesses serve passengers their choice of several entrees on china. Tablecloths are white linen and several wines are offered. Each diner is given a warm towel for his hands.

Copies of the Wall Street Journal and other business publications are provided on board. In-flight telephone service will be added this year.

"Since deregulation, the major airlines have been squeezing down the size of the seats and squeezing the businessman who has to fly," said Johnston, who spent 24 years in the airline business — mostly with USAir and its predecessor, Allegheny — before joining Air 1.

St. Louis was chosen as the hub of the new airline because of the many large companies headquartered in the city. The city's central location allows the relatively small 727s to fly non-stop to either coast.

"The business market out of St. Louis is very heavy," Johnston said.

"For the last few months, the economy has been getting better. We believe this is the time to start a new airline," Johnston said. "We're a little bit different than other airlines started since deregulation," he said.

Air 1 officials said they can afford to provide first-class ser-

vice at coach prices by offering a standard fare, with no discounts, which most business travelers are ineligible for anyway. For example, every Air 1 passenger flying from St. Louis to New York pays the same unrestricted \$242 one-way fare.

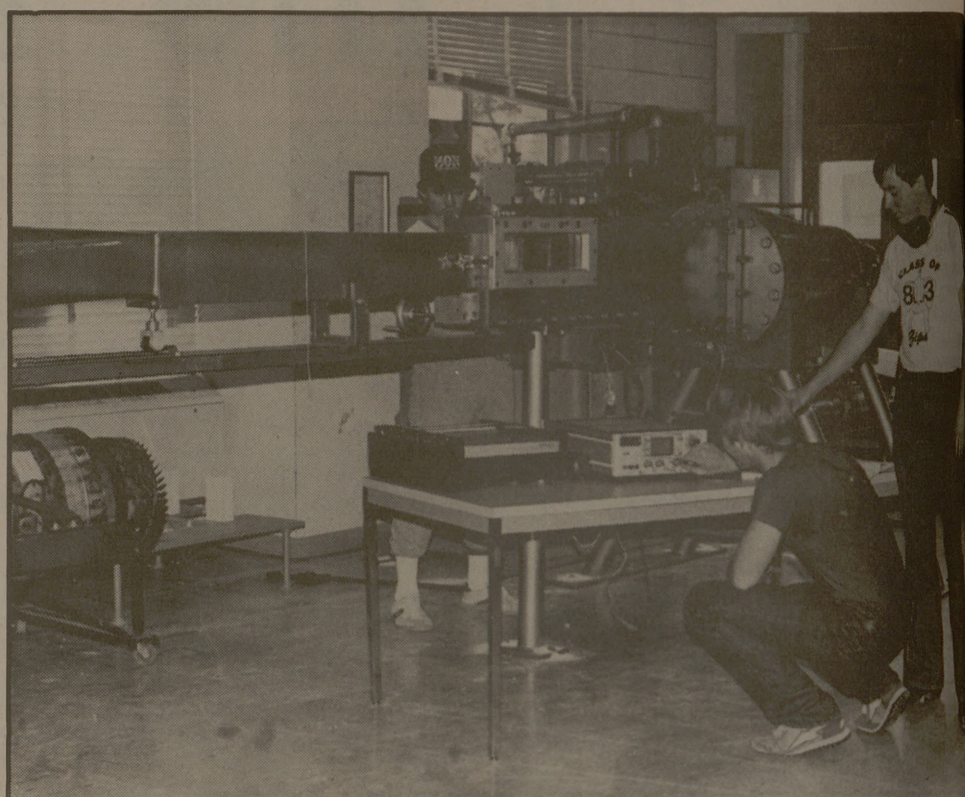
"Keep in mind that approximately 60 percent of business travelers already are paying full coach fare," Johnston said.

Former Apollo astronaut Eugene A. Cernan, now a Houston businessman, is chairman of the board of Air 1. Long-time Ozark Air Lines traffic manager and executive assistant Paul J. Rodgers is president and chief executive.

An industry analyst said he believes the improving economy could be a key to Air 1's success.

"They're taking routes that are heavily traveled," said David C. Jones of Metro Trust Co. in St. Louis. "The economy is a factor. If they're down around 50 percent occupancy or so, they're going to show some considerable losses."

"Obviously, they know what they're doing."



staff photo by Irene

Aerospace Engineers full of wind

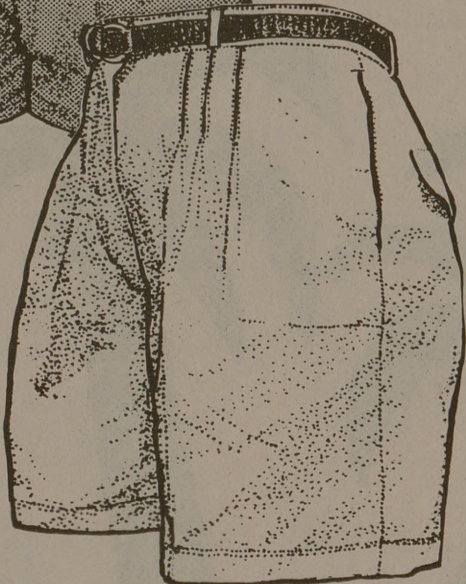
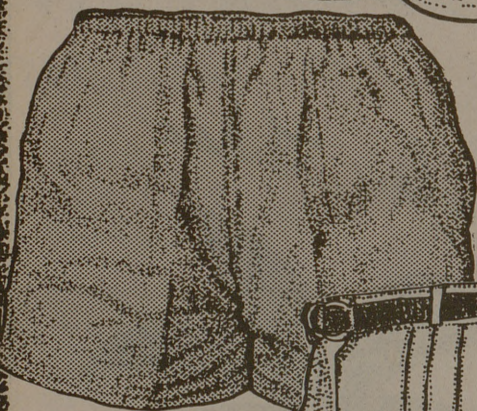
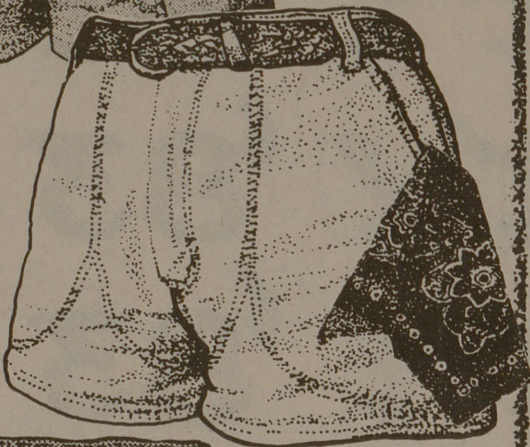
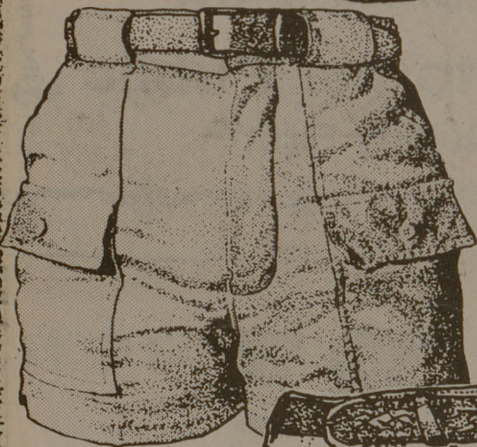
The first supersonic wind tunnel bought by Texas A&M Aerospace Engineering department is in the process of being set up. Helping are aerospace engineering majors,

Dave Doucette, a senior from Antonio, left, Ray Wiltgen, sophomore from Arlington Heights, Ill., and Robert Nerwin, a senior from Corpus Christi.

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