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FedEx moving workers into \$300 million N.C. hub

The Associated Press

GREENSBORO - FedEx Corp. was beginning operations Monday at a new \$300 million hub at Piedmont Triad International Airport, but the company had no immediate plans to expand the work force there because of concerns about the economy.

About 160 workers were to move from FedEx's current PTI terminal to the new hub, where company officials have long planned to increase volume to sort packages for the region. FedEx spokesman Jim McCluskey said the Memphis, Tenn.-based company is still considering adding another 200 workers to the site in the fall, but he cautioned that those plans aren't finalized.

"With the economy being as it has been, we're anxiously hoping for a turnaround," McCluskey said. "Depending on where the economy goes, it will drive our next move at the hub."

The company had previously planned to open the hub with between 600 and 800 workers, with plans to create about 1,500 jobs once the site reached peak capacity. Adding jobs there would help the company reach the potential of the Mid-Atlantic Hub, which can handle additional flights and packages.

The economic downturn has hurt the international shipper. FedEx laid off 1,000 employees companywide last month, coming weeks after the company announced that its fiscal third-quarter earnings fell 75 percent.

FedEx also has U.S. hubs in Memphis, Indianapolis, Anchorage, Alaska and Fort Worth, Texas. The North Carolina facility is about 1 million square feet and has the capacity to sort 24,000 packages per hour. The company chose the site about a decade ago, and officials have planned a third runway to help handle the volume.

Separately, FedEx Ground began construction late last year of a distribution hub in Kernersville that is scheduled to open in 2011, employing about 500 people. That \$100 million site will also consolidate two centers in Winston-Salem.

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