

Third Boeing 717-200 Joins Flight Test Program

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The third Boeing 717-200 entered the company's flight test and certification program today after taking off for the first time from Long Beach Municipal Airport.

At the controls were pilots Capt. Fred Hamilton and Mike Stevens, along with test engineers Madelene Vega and Gerald Prendergast. The 717-200, filled with flight test equipment, lifted off the runway at 8:36 a.m. and landed two hours and 30 minutes later at the Boeing facility in Yuma, Ariz.

Boeing will use this airplane to test how well the 717-200 performs while taking off, and during cruising and landing. It also will be used to certify the airplane's performance and systems, and evaluate pilot workload and type rating.

The 717-200 is the only new 100-seat airplane currently in production. The first 717-200 flew for the first time on Sept. 2, 1998, and the second flew this year on Oct. 26. Both airplanes are generating an increasing number of development flight hours. As of Dec. 15, they have recorded a total of 193 flights and 361 hours. The first customer model, with a complete interior, is scheduled to fly next February. Six production airplanes are now in final assembly at the Long Beach Division. Deliveries are due to begin in mid-1999.

With a standard arrangement of 106 seats, the 717-200 fits a growing worldwide airplane market that demands full-size comfort, low operating and maintenance costs, and high reliability. The 717-200 was designed specifically for airlines operating numerous daily flights of 300 to 500 miles, on short runways, and with fast turnarounds at airport gates. A global team of suppliers in the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia and the Middle East are working with Boeing to produce the 717-200.

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