Boeing 777 Breaks Speed and Distance World Records

Following a record-setting circumnavigation of the world, a Boeing 777-200 landed today at Boeing Field in Seattle, establishing new speed and distance world records for its size and class of airplane.

The 777 carried seven pilots, an observer for the National Aeronautic Association, and Boeing executives and operations personnel -- 23 passengers in all -- aboard the record-setting 41 hour 59 minute flight. Boeing Commercial Airplane Group executive vice president, Richard Albrecht, said: "The 777 is a really magnificent airplane, and this test of its operating capability has exceeded our expectations. We're extremely pleased with its flawless performance in setting the two world records."

The Boeing 777 broke two existing records held by the Airbus A340-211, set when the A340 flew Paris-Auckland-Paris on June 16-18, 1993. During that flight, the A340-211 set the "Great Circle Distance Without Landing" record, traveling 11,814.90 statute miles (19,014.31 km), and it set the record for "Speed Around the World, Eastbound," traveling at an average speed of 789.86 kmh (490.80 mph).

Boeing broke both records, besting the Great Circle Distance Without Landing record by flying from Boeing Field, Seattle, to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, covering 12,455.34 statute miles (20,044.20 km). The Speed Around the World, Eastbound record was set by traveling the Seattle-Kuala Lumpur-Seattle route at an average speed of 553 mph (889 kmh).

The airplane, painted in Malaysia Airlines livery, made the trek with a complete interior, including passenger seating for 278 and operating galleys and lavatories. It flew from Boeing Field in Seattle to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, covering the distance in 21 hours, 23 minutes. The airplane landed yesterday in Kuala Lumpur at 10:11 a.m. local time, April 2 (6:11 p.m., April 1, PST), to participate in a Malaysia Airlines 50th Anniversary celebration. Among those participating in the celebration were Boeing executives Albrecht, and Seddik Belyamani, vice president, International Sales, both passengers on the record-setting flight.

The 777 refueled at Kuala Lumpur airport, departing at 12:15 p.m., local time, April 2 (8:15 p.m. PST, April 1), flying nonstop to Seattle where it touched-down at 2:46 p.m. PST. The flight from Kuala Lumpur took 18 hours 39 minutes, thereby establishing a new Speed Around the World, Eastbound, record upon arrival in Seattle. The record is determined by dividing the distance by the total time taken to complete the trip segments.

The Boeing 777 IGW is the newest member of the 777 family of airplanes. A longer-range version of the 777-200, it has the same physical dimensions as the initial -200 model, but uses the wing center section to carry an additional 14,200 gallons (53,826 liters) of fuel, for a total of 45,220 gallons (171,170 liters). This increases the range of the 777 from 5,925 miles (9,525 kilometers) to 8,225 miles (13,220 kilometers), with a maximum takeoff weight of 632,500 pounds (286,900 kilograms).

The 777 used to set the world records was powered by Rolls-Royce Trent 892 engines, capable of thrust ratings in the 84,000- to 90,000-pound category. The engines offer excellent fuel efficiency, while allowing the 777 to be as quiet as a 767, even though the 777 engines provide 40 percent more power.

As of March 26, 1997, 53 Boeing 777s have been delivered to 10 customers around the world. The 777 family of airplanes has attracted 323 orders from 25 customers.

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