Bell Boeing Announces Customers for New Civil Tiltrotor: 21 Buyers for 29 Bell Boeing 609s So Far

The Bell Boeing joint venture today announced sales of its new Bell Boeing 609 civil tiltrotor aircraft, slated for delivery beginning in 2001. Twenty-one buyers have placed deposits to date for 29 of the world's first civil tiltrotor aircraft, matching the venture's expectations for the nine-passenger tiltrotor. The announcement was made today at the Paris Air Show in Le Bourget, France.

Although some purchasers have declined to be identified, those consenting to be recognized include:

- AeroValls (Principality of Andorra)
- Canadian Helicopter Corporation
- Evergreen Helicopters Inc. (worldwide operator in USA)
- Helicopter Services Group (worldwide operator in Norway)
- Helitech DTY Limited (Australia)
- Lloyds Investment USA (Poland)
- Massachusetts Mutual life Insurance Co. (USA)
- Petroleum Helicopters Inc. (USA)

Bell Boeing will announce additional deposits for purchases received during the air show as they become available.

A 21st century aircraft that combines the takeoff, hover and landing qualities of a helicopter with the high speed, range and efficiency of a turboprop aircraft, the 609 will change aviation's support of a variety of business an civil functions.

The Bell Boeing 609 is a versatile aircraft that will give offshore resource development, emergency medical services and corporate helicopter operators greatly improved performance including speeds twice as fast and ranges twice as far as current helicopters. The Bell Boeing 609 will have lower operating costs than helicopters and improved passenger comfort. The aircraft will give fixed-wing operators the capabilities of a turboprop, but not require a runway.

The Bell Boeing 609 will meet the needs of additional civil missions including disaster relief, search and rescue and government support roles.

New tiltrotor announced at Smithsonian Air & Space Museum

The aircraft's developers, Bell Helicopter Textron and The Boeing Company, previously announced they had formed a joint venture that would design, build, sell and support the world's first civil tiltrotor. That announcement took place last November at the Smithsonian's National Air & Space Museum in Washington, D.C.

Bell and Boeing are the world's leaders in tiltrotor technology development and currently produce the military V-22 Osprey tiltrotor aircraft. Long favored as "dual-use," tiltrotor technology combines into one aircraft the best of both vertical flight and turboprop aircraft capabilities.

Bell Boeing 609 will fly fast and far

Bell Boeing 609 will cruise at 275 knots with a maximum unrefueled range of 750 nautical miles (1,000 nautical miles with auxiliary fuel tanks). Its pressurized cabin will seat up to nine passengers and a crew of two. Its useful load is 5,500 pounds, nearly a ton more than a comparable size helicopter. The Bell Boeing 609 is all-weather capable, and can fly into know moderate icing conditions.

Bell Boeing 609 can do the job of fixed wings and helos

The Bell Boeing 609 offers certain other advantages over other forms of vertical flight. Helicopters have reached their physical performance limits while tiltrotors offer unique flexibility, increased productivity, lower operating costs (versus helicopters) and can replace mixed fleets of helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft with one aircraft.

Extensive customer surveys determined aircraft capabilities

Bell and Boeing extensively surveyed current helicopters operators and potential customers to determine exact needs for such an aircraft and its specifications. On the basis of these surveys, the developers found broad market appeal for the size, range and speed of the Bell Boeing 609.

Completion of the first four aircraft prototypes will take place in 1998 with first flight in 1999 and certification by the Federal Aviation Administration and first customer delivery in 2001.

The Bell Boeing joint venture consists of Bell Helicopter Textron Inc., and division of Textron Inc., and Boeing Defense & Space Group, Rotorcraft Sector, a unit of The Boeing Company.

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