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At a ceremony today in Taipei to commemorate its 40th anniversary, Far Eastern Air Transport announced plans to purchase 10 Boeing 757-200s and two Boeing MD-83s.

"To cope with our route-expansion plans to Southeast Asia and direct air links with mainland China, we have decided to buy these airplanes," stated Capt. Y.L. Lee, president of Far Eastern.

The MD-83s and five of the 757-200 orders announced today are firm orders; the five remaining 757s are options. Deliveries are set for 1998 through the year 2000. Far Eastern has the right to convert the 757-200 orders to the longer -300 model. The airline currently operates an all-Boeing fleet of 14 airplanes.

Far Eastern, whose major shareholders include China Development Corporation and Fubon Insurance, is a profitable airline, operating with load factors around 70%. The airline flies 14 domestic routes as well as international routes to Subic Bay in The Philippines, and Coror, Republic of Palau.

The Boeing 757-200 has a range of 4,500 statute miles and can carry up to 201 passengers in a typical mixed-class configuration. As of Oct. 31, orders for the 757-200 totaled 891 aircraft.

The Boeing 757-300, which has a range of 4,000 statute miles, will carry up to 243 passengers in a mixed-class configuration. The first 757-300 is scheduled to be delivered in January 1999.

Over the same distance, the operating costs of the 757-300 will be about 10 percent lower than the 757-200 on a per-seat basis. The 757-200 already has the lowest operating costs per seat-mile (the cost of flying one airplane seat one mile, a standard industry measure) in its market segment.

The Boeing MD-83 is the longest-range version of the popular MD-80 series, flying up to 2,880 statute miles nonstop. It carries up to 155 passengers in a mixed-class configuration.

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