First Boeing 737-700 Goes to Southwest Airlines

Southwest Airlines today became the world's first airline to take delivery of a Next-Generation Boeing 737-700, the newest member of the popular 737 family.

During a brief ceremony at Boeing Field, Southwest representatives took delivery of the first 737-700. The airline launched the Next-Generation 737 program in November 1993 with an order for 63 737-700s.

"Southwest has established itself as a leader -- not only in the marketplace, but also in selecting the right airplanes to meet the market's needs," said Ron Woodard, president, Boeing Commercial Airplane Group. "Southwest has a long history of commercial success by consistently applying its low-fare, high-value strategy.

"Boeing has been fortunate to have Southwest as a successful business partner over the past 26 years, and we wish them continued success with their Next-Generation 737s," Woodard added. Southwest's fleet of 258 jetliners consists entirely of Boeing 737s.

In Dallas, Gary Barron, Southwest's chief operating officer, said, "The 737 models serve our high-frequency, short-haul operation very well. The additional attributes and operational flexibility of the 737-700 make the economics superior."

"We've worked closely with Southwest to design an airplane that would serve their needs into the next century," said Gary Scott, 737/757 Programs vice president-general manager. "It has since become the fastest-selling airplane prior to delivery in history, with orders for 737 Next-Generation 737s to 36 customers worldwide."

The first 737-700 delivery follows a three-year effort to achieve U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) certification. More than 20,000 engineering laboratory and airplane tests were completed before certification was awarded last month.

Modifications to the Next-Generation 737's wing and engine provide improved fuel capacity, fuel efficiency, speed and range. The total wing area increased by 25 percent to 1,340 square feet (125 square meters), providing 30 percent more fuel capacity for a total of 6,878 U.S. gallons (26,136 liters).

The airplane's range is approximately 3,200 nautical miles (3,682 statute miles or 5,926 kilometers), an increase of up to 900 nautical miles over current-production 737s. This will allow U.S. transcontinental flights and increased 737 route capability throughout the world.

The 737-700 is powered by new CFM56-7 engines produced by CFMI, a joint venture of General Electric of the United States and Snecma of France. The CFM56-7 will have a 10-percent higher thrust capability than the CFM56-3C engines that power today's 737s.

###