Boeing Introduces 717-200 Airplane as New Regional Jet

The Boeing Company today introduced and renamed the newest member of its commercial airplane family -- the Boeing 717-200 twinjet.

"The 717-200 is uniquely qualified to meet the evolving requirements of the new regional jetliner market," said Ron Woodard, president, Boeing Commercial Airplane Group. "It's a 100-seat airplane market that demands comfort, low operating costs and high schedule reliability. This is the plane to meet that need."

The 717-200 was first introduced to the world in October 1995 as the McDonnell Douglas MD-95. AirTran Airlines launched production with an order for 50 and options for 50 more.

Today's announcement embraces the 717-200 as a strong addition to the Boeing product line. The twinjet represents the merged company's commitment to continued production and development of a plane that is ideally suited to meet worldwide expansion and replacement needs in the short-haul, high-frequency 100-seat market. The 717-200 meets those needs by featuring low operating costs, high schedule reliability, efficient short-runway operations, fast turnaround at airport gates and the capability of achieving eight to 12 one-hour flights on a daily basis.

Boeing anticipates that the world's airlines will need 2,500 jetliners of 80-120 seats over the next 20 years.

The first three 717-200s are in final assembly at the Douglas Products Division of Boeing Commercial Airplane Group in Long Beach, Calif. The program involves a global team of 14 major supplier-partners. Currently, 900 Boeing employees are developing and building the 717-200.

"We and our supplier-partners are producing a new airplane with the highest quality at the lowest-possible acquisition cost," Woodard said.

Passengers and flight crews will appreciate the 717-200's all-new spacious interior, which features illuminated handrails, larger overhead bins and other amenities.

The 717-200 two-crew flight deck incorporates the industry's most modern and proven avionics, configured around six liquid-crystal display units and advanced Honeywell VIA 2000 computer systems similar to those in other new Boeing jetliners. The flight deck has an electronic instrument system, a flight-management system and a central-fault display system. Options available include a Category IIIb autoland capability for bad weather; Global Positioning System; and Future Air Navigation System.

Two advanced high-bypass-ratio BR715 engines, built by BMW Rolls-Royce, will power the Boeing 717-200. For the 717-200, this engine is rated at 18,500 pounds of takeoff thrust, with an optional increase up to 21,000 pounds. It provides airlines with lower fuel consumption, reduced exhaust emissions and significantly lower noise levels than power plants on comparable airplanes.

With a wingspan of 93.4 feet (28.5 meters) and an overall length of 124 feet (37.8 meters), the 717-200 is similar in size and configuration to the DC-9 Series 30, its highly successful predecessor in regional airline service around the world. Basic maximum takeoff weight of the 717-200 will be 114,000 pounds (51,710 kilograms) with an option for a high-gross-weight version at 121,000 pounds (54,884 kilograms). Nonstop range will be up to 2,230 statute miles (1,940 nautical miles -- 3,122 kilometers).

The first 717-200 is scheduled to be delivered to AirTran Airlines in June 1999, after a year-long flight-test program and joint certification by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and Europe's Joint Airworthiness Authorities.