Boeing Wichita Rolls Out First 757-300 Forward Section

Boeing Wichita today planned to roll out the first forward section of the fuselage for the new Boeing 757-300, the largest and longest single-aisle airplane ever built by Boeing.

The section, which contains the airplane's flight deck, is built in Wichita as are 757-300 engine nacelles and body panels for most of the 757-300 fuselage sections.

"This program has the shortest design-to-production and delivery-cycle time of any Boeing derivative airplane -- 27 months -- and Wichita has been instrumental in accomplishing this very ambitious goal," said Jeff Turner, Boeing Commercial Airplane Group-Wichita vice president and general manager. "The performance was made possible only by all the hard work and dedication of the Boeing workforce."

Launched in September 1996 with an order for 12 airplanes by German charter carrier Condor Flugdienst, the 757-300 program has scheduled its first delivery for January 1999. Firm configuration for the airplane was reached in November 1996, and assembly work at Wichita began last year.

Measuring 178 feet 7 inches, the 757-300 - a derivative of the 757-200 -- will be the largest and longest single-aisle airplane ever built by Boeing. By comparison, the 757-200 is 155 feet 3 inches long, a difference of 23 feet 4 inches. To stretch the airplane, designers extended the fuselage by 13 feet 4 inches in front of the wing, and 10 feet behind it.

The configuration also required Wichita to produce 400-inch-long body panels for the fuselage. To transport the skins to the Renton, Wash, factory, where final assembly and delivery take place, Wichita also designed and built new shipping containers.

When loaded into the box, the skins will be suspended from an overhead bar rather than lain flat, which is the method currently used to ship panels for the 757-200. The 757-300 panels are the second-longest body panels Wichita has ever produced for Boeing commercial airplanes. Only some of the panels for the 777 are longer.

While the 757-300 will retain the same flight deck and operating systems as the 757-200, it will offer new vacuum lavatories and interior, and strengthened wings and landing gear. The airplane will carry between 243 and 279 passengers -- 20 percent more than the 757-200 -- depending on configuration.