# Boeing Business Jet Nears Design Completion

Boeing engineers have released for production 90 percent of the design drawings necessary to build the Boeing Business Jet (BBJ). This means that the BBJ program is moving from its development phase to full production.

"The engineers supporting this program reached this milestone a month ahead of schedule, which is very important in keeping the overall program on track," said Gil Key, manager of the 737-700 Increased Gross Weight (IGW)/Boeing Business Jet program.

The BBJ is derived from the Boeing Next-Generation 737-700. The airplane combines the size of the 737-700 fuselage (110 feet 4 inches, 33.6 meters) with the strengthened wings and landing gear of the larger 737-800. This combination boosts the jet's range to 7,140 statute miles (6,200 nautical miles, 11,480 kilometers).

"Integrating the designs of the -700 and -800 models has proven to be a relatively painless task thanks to the use of digital design techniques, open communication and team work between the designers and engineers," Key said.

With most engineering drawings complete, Key said the first small, detailed parts for the airplane are being manufactured at the Boeing plants in Wichita, Kan., and Auburn, Wash. Major assembly of the first BBJ fuselage is scheduled to take place in Wichita in April. The fuselage is scheduled to arrive at the Boeing manufacturing facility in Renton, Wash. in May. The BBJ's first flight is scheduled for late August.

"It's exciting to see this airplane start to come together now in a tangible form," Key said. "We've talked with customers for more than 18 months about the new dimensions in space that this product will provide. Very soon they will actually have a chance to step into a BBJ and experience it firsthand."

With an 807-square foot passenger cabin, the BBJ offers virtually identical interior space to its primary competitor -- the Airbus A319 Corporate Jet -- and nearly three times as much space as the Gulfstream V and the Bombardier Global Express - the other competitors in the large executive-jet market. The BBJ's interior can seat up to 63 passengers and can be tailored to provide space for many combinations of layouts to accommodate customer requirements for meetings rooms, individual work areas and rest spaces.

Since its launch as a joint venture between The Boeing Company and General Electric Co. (GE) in July 1996, Boeing Business Jets has announced 29 airplane orders. The jet is being purchased by three kinds of customers -- global entrepreneurs and wealthy individuals; large corporations; and governments/heads of state. Last year alone, these customers purchased 26 BBJs.

Later this year, customers will be able to purchase BBJs through a fractional-ownership program established by Boeing Business Jets and Executive Jet Inc., of Montvale, N.J. The program provides access to the BBJ for customers who have a requirement for a large, long-range business airplane but who cannot justify the cost of an entire business jet. Details of the program are being finalized.

"The market interest in the BBJ remains very strong," said Borge Boeskov, president of Boeing Business Jets. "We plan to announce details of our fractional ownership program very soon, as well as a number of new orders we have booked since the end of last year. In the meantime, we are pleased to be proceeding toward deliveries to our first customers during the fourth quarter of this year."

Boeing Commercial Airplane Group will provide airplanes to Boeing Business Jets, which then will deliver them to Georgetown, Del., where PATS Inc. will install supplemental fuel tanks.

From there, the airplanes will be flown to one of six customer-selected completion centers for interior installation and paint. The six centers are KC Aviation, and Associated Air Center in Dallas, Texas; The Jet Center in Van Nuys, California; Raytheon in Waco, Texas; Lufthansa Technik in Hamberg, Germany; and Jet Aviation in Basel, Switzerland.

The business jet is comparably priced to existing long-range corporate jets. The price for an unfurnished, or "green," airplane is $34.25 million (1998$). A completely furnished and equipped business jet will cost approximately $40 million at delivery.

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