Boeing Next-Generation 737-800 Receives FAA Approval

The second model of the Next-Generation 737 family, the 737-800, has earned type certification from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The certification formally recognizes that the 737-800 has passed all the rigorous testing requirements of both Boeing and the FAA, and is ready to enter passenger service with U.S. airlines. The certification was awarded late Friday at Renton, Wash.

"This is another proud day for Boeing and the Next-Generation 737 Program," said Jack Gucker, vice president -- 737/757 Derivatives. "FAA certification of our second model in four months is further validation of our plan for simultaneous development of the family of the 737-700/ -800/ -600/ and -900 models."

The 737-800 is capable of carrying 160 to 189 passengers and is 19 feet longer than the 737-700. It is expected to receive validation from Europe's Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA) by the end of March. Launch customer Hapag-Lloyd of Germany is scheduled to take delivery of the first 737-800 shortly thereafter. Continental will be the first U.S.-based airline to take delivery of the 737-800 later this year.

More than 350 flight tests were completed before certification was awarded. Since the 737-800 began its flight test program in June 1997, the three test airplanes have completed more than 760 flights, 550 hours of ground testing and 740 hours of flight testing.

The 128-to-149 seat 737-700 is the airplane that launched the Next-Generation program when Southwest Airlines ordered 63 in November 1993. The first 737-700 was delivered to Southwest in December 1997.

The 108-to-132 seat 737-600 made its first flight in January 1998. First delivery to SAS, or Scandinavian Airlines, is planned for third quarter 1998.

The 737-900 is the largest member of the family, carrying 177 to 189 passengers. The flight-test and certification schedule for the 737-900 program is being finalized. Alaska Airlines is scheduled to take delivery of the first 737-900 in 2001.

The 737-600 and -900 will participate in separate flight-test and certification programs. When completed, the total Next-Generation 737 flight-test program will have comprised 12 airplanes, including four 737-700s, three 737-800s, three 737-600s and two 737-900s. Upon conclusion, the flight-test program will have totaled more than 4,100 in-flight test hours.

In addition to commercial airplanes, Boeing also offers a business jet derived from the 737-700. With auxiliary fuel tanks, the business jet can fly up to 6,200 nautical miles. The business jet is sold and marketed through Boeing Business Jets, a joint venture formed in 1996 between The Boeing Company and General Electric Co. The first business jet is scheduled to roll out in mid-1998, followed by certification later in the year.

The Next-Generation 737 airplane family is designed to fly higher, farther, faster and quieter than previous 737 models. Changes from earlier models include a new and larger wing, higher cruise speed, greater range and new engines with improvements in noise, fuel burn, thrust and maintenance costs. In addition, the new engines benefit the environment through lower emissions.

The Next-Generation 737 family continues to be the fastest-selling jetliner model in history. Since the program's launch, 39 customers have placed orders for 840 Next-Generation 737s.

###