JAA Approves Boeing Next-Generation 737-800

The second model in the Next-Generation 737 airplane family, the 737-800, has cleared its last major milestone prior to beginning service with European airlines. Europe's Joint Aviation Authorities (JAA), which comprise the aviation regulatory authorities of 27 countries, has recommended type validation of the -800 model . Actual type certificates will be awarded by the individual countries.

The JAA's approval of the 737-800 comes a month after type certification by the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). FAA certification cleared the airplane for passenger service within the United States.

"For the past three years, we've worked closely with the regulatory authorities in Europe on addressing certification issues in order to reach this moment, " said Jack Gucker, vice president -- 737/757 Derivatives. "In addition, to receive JAA validation just weeks after the 737-700 is an indication that our plan to simultaneously develop the Next-Generation 737 family of airplanes is working."

Launch customer Hapag-Lloyd of Germany is scheduled to take delivery of the first 737-800 in April. Hapag-Lloyd is an inclusive tours operator with routes throughout Europe, the Mediterranean, the Canary Islands and Dominican Republic.

"Over time, we plan to replace the 737-400s and -500s we currently have in service with this more efficient model," said Wolfgang Kurth, Hapag-Lloyd managing director.

More than 350 flight tests were completed before the FAA and JAA validations were awarded. The FAA approved the 737-800 on March 13; the JAA officially gave its approval April 9. Since the 160-to-189 seat 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.

In addition to the 737-700 and -800, the Next-Generation 737 family includes the 737-600 and -900 models. 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. The -600 model is currently in the midst of testing. 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, 40 customers have placed orders for 866 Next-Generation 737s.

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