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Boeing Commercial Airplane Group today confirmed an order by American Airlines for 25 more of the manufacturer's popular Next-Generation 737-800 airplanes, bringing the airline's total number of firm 737 orders to 100.

The Next-Generation 737s are scheduled to be delivered between January 2000 and January 2002, at a rate of approximately one per month.

The announcement comes just days before American's pioneering Chairman, Robert L. Crandall, retires after 25 years with the Dallas-based carrier. Crandall is credited with inventing the hub-and-spoke system, discount airfares, frequent-flier programs and long-term partnerships with manufacturers.

In November 1996 American identified Boeing as its preferred airplane supplier by announcing firm orders for 103 Boeing jetliners over the next 20 years, cementing a long-term working relationship between American Airlines and Boeing.

During Crandall's tenure at American - in addition to 100 of the best-selling 737s - the airline has ordered 103 Boeing 757s, 79 767s, 19 777s, as well as 260 MD-80s and 19 MD-11s that are now part of the Boeing family.

"This order again underscores the benefits of American's purchase-rights arrangement with Boeing, which allows us to match aircraft acquisition with changing business conditions," said Donald J. Carty, American's new president. "As I tour the system, meeting with employees, I am encouraged by the level of enthusiasm for the new planes and the growth opportunities associated with them."

"We designed the Next-Generation 737 to deliver value to the world's airlines, and we are delighted that American Airlines continues to endorse the airplane," said Boeing Commercial Airplane Group President Ron Woodard. "This order is particularly meaningful to us because it is the last order we will receive from American with Robert Crandall at the helm. Bob has been a true leader in this industry for more than two decades. We have enjoyed a wonderful partnership with American Airlines during that time and we look forward to working together long into the future."

American's 737-800s will seat 20 in First Class and 126 in the main cabin, and will be powered by CFM56-7 engines manufactured by CFMI, a joint venture of General Electric of the U.S. and Snecma of France.

The Next-Generation models - the 737-600/ -700/ -800/ -900 - build on the strengths that have made the 737 the world's most successful commercial jetliner while incorporating improvements designed for the 21st century. Changes from Classic 737 models include a new larger wing, higher cruise speed, more range and new engines with improvements in noise, fuel burn and thrust.

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