Boeing Begins Program To Modernize E-6 Cockpits

Boeing has begun a program to modernize the cockpits of the U.S. Navy E-6 aircraft, an effort that will result in replacing more than 100 cockpit instruments with six flat-panel displays.

Boeing will adapt its Next Generation 737-700 cockpit and avionics architecture to the E-6 fleet, which provide a vital communications link between national command authorities and U.S. Strategic Command submarine and land-based ballistic missile forces. Other industry team members participating in the program include Honeywell Defense Avionics Systems and Smiths Industries Defense Systems North America.

According to Chuck Moss, Boeing E-6 program manager, the new system will result in substantial long-term cost savings for the Navy by dramatically improving E-6 navigation, communications and cockpit display systems reliability and maintainability.

"This effort not only is an effective application of commercial investments to lower support costs, but also meets the emerging Global Air Traffic Management (GATM) requirements, which preserve unrestricted global airspace access for the Navy," Moss said.

Moss added that the company's modernization work primarily will be done in Seattle and in Wichita, Kan., and will be completed in 2004.

The E-6 airframe is a modified Boeing 707-320B with CFM-56 engines. Boeing delivered 16 E-6 airplanes to the U.S. Navy from 1989 to 1992.

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