First Boeing MD 600N Helicopter for U.S. Border Patrol Makes Debut

The first of 45 Boeing MD 600N helicopters for the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) is about to make a run for the border, literally.

The versatile law enforcement MD 600N was unveiled today at the U.S. Border Patrol's San Diego sector headquarters.

Over the next several years, the advanced technology MD 600N, produced by The Boeing Company in Mesa, Ariz., will be assigned to U.S. Border Patrol operating sectors between San Diego and Miami, Fla., as the beginning of the INS Fleet Replacement Program for its fleet of OH-6A helicopters.

The larger, more powerful MD 600N helicopters give U.S. Border Patrol agents greater effectiveness in their flight operations against illegal drugs and illegal entry into the United States. To increase productivity, particularly during night operations, the U.S. Border Patrol is incorporating night surveillance equipment and improved communicating tools as standard equipment in the helicopters. New auxiliary fuel tanks give the MD 600Ns up to five hours of endurance while on patrol.

Alan Neugebauer, business development manager for Boeing in Mesa, said the new MD 600N was selected during a competition that included a comprehensive technical proposal review and a thorough flight evaluation.

The 45-aircraft award, estimated at $70.7 million, including aircraft, spares and support, calls for delivery of nine MD 600N helicopters the first year and options for nine more MD 600Ns each year for four additional years. The U.S. Border Patrol has contracted for 10 MD 600Ns and recently exercised its option for the second nine aircraft.

The eight-place, single-turbine MD 600N features the exclusive, ultra-quiet NOTAR system for anti-torque and directional control, high-reliability and low direct operating costs. The NOTAR system, which has been in service since 1991 on three types of helicopters, makes the helicopters the safest and quietest helicopters flying. Since the system was introduced in 1991 and in more than 175,000 hours of flying, there have been no failures or accidents related to the anti-torque system on any NOTAR system-equipped helicopter.

"The quiet technology of the MD 600N permits U.S. Border Patrol aircraft to reduce their detectability during surveillance operations and to 'fly neighborly' when operating over urban areas," Neugebauer said.

"Additionally, the application of more modern aircraft into the U.S. Border Patrol fleet brings greater reliability and longer component life than previously available, reducing direct operating costs and improving aircraft availability."

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