

Boeing 717-200 Enters Flight Test Program

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The second Boeing 717-200 - the only new 100-seat airplane currently in production - entered the company's flight test and certification program yesterday after taking off for the first time from the Long Beach Municipal Airport.

Filled with flight test equipment, the 717-200 lifted off the runway at 11:43 a.m. and landed one hour and 20 minutes later at the Boeing facility in Yuma, Ariz. At the controls were pilots Capts. Randy Wyatt and Lee Johnson, assisted by test conductor Patrick Nightingale. Duncan Steele of BMW Rolls-Royce, the 717-200 engine manufacturer, also was on board.

The crew performed production flight procedures and assorted avionics tests. The airplane will be used to develop and certify the 717-200's avionics systems.

The first 717-200, also undergoing flight testing in Yuma, flew for the first time on Sept. 2, 1998. Since then it has made 55 flights totaling more than 100 hours. The airplane has reached a maximum speed of Mach 0.8 (531 mph) and an altitude of 35,000 feet. A third 717-200 with test equipment is due to join the flight-test program in December, followed by the first production customer model next February. Deliveries are scheduled to start in mid-1999.

With a standard arrangement of 106 seats, the 717-200 fits a growing worldwide airplane market that demands full-size jetliner comfort, low operating costs and high reliability. The 717-200 was designed specifically for airlines operating numerous daily flights of 300 to 500 miles, on short runways and with fast turnarounds at airport gates.

A global team of suppliers in the United States, Canada, Europe, Asia and the Middle East are working with Boeing to produce the 717-200.

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