Boeing Awarded Contract to Re-engine Two Atlas Air 747-200s

The Boeing Company announced today that it has been awarded a contract to re-engine two 747-200 airplanes for Colorado-based cargo carrier Atlas Air.

The modification work will be performed under the direction of Boeing Airplane Services, with the Wichita Modification Center responsible for all aspects of the re-engine work. Value of the contract was not disclosed.

Under the contract, Boeing will replace the airplanes' JT9D-7J engines with CF6-50E-2 engines and install updated engine struts and various related systems to match Atlas Air's fleet of freighters powered by General Electric engines. Additionally, Boeing will obtain a Supplemental Type Certificate for the re-engined airplane.

"We are pleased to continue our relationship with the Wichita Modification Center through the commencement of this new project, which will improve commonality and reduce operational cost of the Atlas fleet," said Michael Chowdry, Atlas Air chief executive officer.

The two Atlas airplanes mark the 16th and 17th airplanes to be modified by the Wichita Modification Center, according to Center Director Vic McMullen. The Boeing facility in Wichita, which has converted 15 jumbo jets from passenger configuration to freighter for the successful cargo airline, adds a new capability with the Atlas agreement.

"This is a first for Wichita," McMullen said, referring to the re-engining work. "We're delighted that we could initiate this business with Atlas Air, a valued customer of ours since 1991.

"Boeing Airplane Services foresees a substantial market for additional 747-200s to be re-engined," he continued, "and we're looking forward to performing this work and providing value to our customers, and at the same time helping them achieve their business objectives."

The first Atlas airplane is scheduled to arrive in Wichita for re-engining in February 1999, and the second in April 1999. The work is expected to take about 60 days per airplane.

One of the airplanes was reconfigured previously at Wichita in the late 1980s as part of the Civil Reserve Air Fleet program, in which 19 Boeing 747s were converted from passenger configurations to convertible passenger/cargo aircraft. That program concluded in 1990.

The Boeing Wichita full-service Modification Center specializes in wide-bodied aircraft modifications, maintenance and structural enhancements. Since 1972, the Wichita Modification Center has modified 85 Boeing 747 airplanes to freighter/cargo configuration, and also converted a 747 into the NASA shuttle carrier aircraft.

The Wichita Modification Center became part of Boeing Airplane Services in June, when the new business was established. In addition to providing 747 freighter conversions, the unit is known for its DC-10/MD-11 passenger-to-freighter work and other modifications that enhance commercial airplane performance and productivity. The business also provides interior reconfiguration programs and extensive engineering services, including avionics upgrades, performance improvements and other upgrades on Boeing and Douglas-built airplanes.

Headquartered in the Puget Sound region of Washington, Boeing Airplane Services has 1,500 employees based at Wichita and Long Beach, Calif. Joe Gullion, president of the new business, is leading the Boeing modification team toward its goal of providing the world's finest and most competitive commercial airplane modifications and related engineering services.

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