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The Boeing Company marked a significant achievement last night by rolling out the first two Next-Generation 737s built at the increased rate of 24 airplanes per month. This new production rate is the highest ever for a single commercial airplane model.

The newly manufactured airplanes, one a 737-800 destined for American Airlines and the other a Boeing Business Jet (BBJ), left the factory floor in Renton, Wash. The BBJ, a derivative of the Next-Generation 737-700, combines the -700 fuselage with the strengthened wings and landing gear of the larger and heavier 737-800. The rollout marks the full implementation of the new rate in final assembly.

"After working through a successful recovery plan in 1998, we were ready for the increased production rates," said Dennis Vezzetti, director of Operations for Single-Aisle Airplane Programs. "Achieving this new record is the result of a great team effort that included everyone: hourly, salaried and management." Vezzetti also commented that the factory was back on track and producing per schedule.

John Hayhurst, vice president and general manager of the 737 Programs, added, "This efficient rate increase allows us to deliver more quality airplanes on time, to better meet our customer expectations and to focus on earning a better return for our shareholders."

Currently, 215 Next-Generation 737s have been delivered to 30 operators worldwide. With more than 1,127 orders from 57 customers, the Next-Generation 737 program is the fastest-selling airplane family in commercial aviation history.

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