Boeing Rolls Out First MD-10 Freighter For FedEx

The Boeing Company today rolled out the first MD-10 freighter during ceremonies held at the ompany's Long Beach facility. FedEx is the launch customer for the MD-10 conversion program.

"MD-10" is the designation given to modified DC-10s that incorporate the Boeing Advanced Common Flightdeck (ACF). The MD-10 instrument panel layout is identical to the Boeing MD-11. Additionally, pilots can receive a single certification to operate both airplanes.

"This is an important day for the MD-10 program," said Joe Gullion, president - Boeing Airplane Services. "The MD-10 is a great example of how Boeing Airplane Services can help our customers make affordable, high-quality improvements to their commercial airplanes."

FedEx launched the MD-10 program in September 1996 with an order for 60 MD-10 conversions. FedEx later increased its commitment to the program and currently has 79 orders, with options for up to 40 more MD-10s.

Theodore L. Weise, president and chief executive officer of FedEx, said, "The MD-10 will provide us with a cost-effective solution to our cargo carrying needs. We expect to get many years of service from these airplanes." FedEx operates a fleet of 26 MD-11s and is scheduled to receive three more from Boeing before production of the tri-jet ends next year. In addition, FedEx is purchasing a number of used MD-11s.

The MD-10 program is managed by Boeing Airplane Services, a new Boeing business offering engineering retrofit packages, avionics upgrades, passenger-to-freighter conversions, interior reconfigurations, recovery and repair services, and airplane performance improvements for all Boeing commercial airplanes. Boeing Airplane Services also provides technical consulting and general contracting support for airlines.

The MD-10 flight deck employs state-of-the-art avionics systems provided by Honeywell Air Transport Systems of Phoenix, Ariz. The new cockpit will feature six 8-inch-square liquid-crystal displays, operated by a Honeywell VIA 2000 computer system - similar to those found in newer airplanes such as the Boeing 777 and 717.

The new cockpit will enable the MD-10 to be flown by a two-person crew, in contrast to the three-person crew required to operate the original DC-10.

The MD-10 is scheduled to fly for the first time later this month and will enter a flight-test program expected to last for 10 to 12 months. Two other FedEx MD-10s will enter the flight-test program later this year.

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