Boeing Business Jet Makes Longest Ever Non-Stop 737 Flight

A recently delivered Boeing Business Jet (BBJ) has successfully completed the longest ever nonstop flight for a 737, Boeing Business Jets announced today. The airplane flew 13 hours 51 minutes 42 seconds and traveled 6,252.5 nautical miles (7,200.4 statute miles) (11,580 kilometers).

BBJ chief pilot Michael Hewett and former United Airlines 747 pilot Clay Lacy staged the airplane Thursday night at Martin State Airport near Baltimore, after leaving the PATS, Inc., modification center in Georgetown, Del. BBJ auxiliary fuel tanks are installed at PATS, Inc., after an airplane is delivered "green" (no paint or interior) to the customer in Seattle.

"This is a great airplane," said Hewett. "Business jet owners now have the interior space and the range to do business on a global scale. This is a 'one-stop to anywhere-in-the-world' business tool."

The airplane took off from Martin State Airport at 8:32 a.m. local time Friday and climbed to 37,000 feet (11,277 meters), flying to Kennebunkport, Maine, where it turned west and climbed to 39,000 feet (11,887 meters). After reaching Seattle, 6 hours and 28 minutes into the flight, the airplane turned south and climbed to a final cruise altitude of 41,000 feet (12,496 meters). At San Diego, the BBJ turned southeast toward Texas, then on to Miami and back north to Baltimore. At Baltimore, the airplane held until fuel was at normal reserves, then landed at Sussex County airport near PATS, Inc., in Georgetown, Del.

Average speed for the flight was 451 knots (519 miles per hour).

Amount of fuel used was 65,580 pounds (29,746.6 kilograms).

Amount of fuel still in reserve at landing was 5,520 pounds (2,503 kilograms).

This airplane was equipped with a nine-tank fuel system, capable of holding an additional 3,820 U.S. gallons (14,458 liters) of jet fuel, giving the BBJ a total fuel capacity of 10,695 U.S. gallons (40,480 liters).

The airplane - one of the first dozen BBJs built - belongs to an undisclosed customer. The next stage in the finishing process is to install the interior of the airplane at one of several BBJ completion centers in Europe or the United States.

The BBJ is a derivative of the Boeing Next-Generation 737-700, combining the -700 fuselage with the strengthened wings and landing gear of the larger and heavier 737-800. Typical range for a fully configured BBJ with nine auxiliary tanks, full interior, eight passengers, and winglets is 6,200 nautical miles (11,475 kilometers).

Clay Lacy is also known for his around-the-world, record-setting 747 "Friendship One" flight in January 1988. "I've flown just about everything," said Lacy. "And this is the direction in which big business leaders are going. You have to fly far to do business in the world today. And you can't fly these distances in traditional business jets without paying a stiff penalty in comfort and productivity."

Boeing Business Jets recently flight tested a BBJ equipped with blended winglets manufactured by Aviation Partners Inc. Winglets certification is expected for the end of this year and winglets are now a part of the baseline configuration for all BBJs. Winglets will give the airplane greater fuel efficiency and consequently more range. Flight test results showed a more than five percent increase in fuel efficiency for the BBJ tested. The airplane used in Friday's flight was not equipped with winglets.

Boeing Business Jets is a joint venture between The Boeing Company and General Electric Company. Started in July 1996, the venture had received 46 BBJ orders as of the company's last official order announcement.

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