Boeing 717-200 Test Airplane Flies AirTran Airways Routes

The first Boeing 717-200 production-configured airplane, painted in the colors of launch customer AirTran Airways, has successfully completed a unique, 10-day simulated airline program.

The program, known as the Pre-Aircraft Certification Airline Simulated Operation (PACASO), was used to demonstrate the 717-200's operational performance as well as the airline's ground support capabilities.

"PACASO is an early opportunity to gain real in-service experience before AirTran conducts its required FAA route-proving operation and then starts carrying passengers this October," said Jim Phillips, Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group vice president - 717 Program.

The 717-200 used in PACASO is one of four development airplanes making good progress in the Boeing flight test and certification program. The airplane was operated on AirTran's U.S. route system, covering more than 25 airports in 12 states. AirTran pilots, flight attendants, mechanics and service personnel participated in the operation.

AirTran is the launch customer for the 717-200, an airplane Boeing is committed to developing to meet the airline industry's need for efficient, 100-seat transports for regional service. AirTran has 50 orders and 50 options for the 717-200. It is scheduled to receive the first airplane in September and seven more before the end of the year

The 717-200 is the only new 100-seat airplane in production today. It is designed specifically for short-haul, high-frequency routes and offers low acquisition, trip and maintenance costs. The 717-200 is the quietest airplane in its class and offers a new flight deck and engines, and a comfortable interior.

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For further information:
Warren Lamb
562-593-3269