Boeing 717 Completes Flawless European Tour

The Boeing 717, showcased recently at the Paris Air Show, has returned to its base in Yuma, Ariz., following 27 days of flying exhibitions and customer demonstrations in seven European countries. The airplane made 24 flights in 14 cities, including crowd-pleasing performances at the Paris Air Show.

According to Jim Phillips, Boeing 717 Program vice president and general manager, the airplane performed flawlessly from the day it departed for Europe until it returned home.

"The tour has been a great success," Phillips said. "The airplane met all of our expectations while making a great impression on our airline guests."

This 717 is the second production airplane produced at The Boeing Company's Long Beach Division. The first four 717 airplanes, three test airplanes and a production version, are currently completing flight-test and certification requirements.

Boeing expects to receive certification from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and Europe's Joint Aviation Authorities in September. The 717 is the only new 100-seat airplane in flight test and production today.

Following the Paris Air Show, the airplane embarked on a six-country tour beginning in Helsinki, Finland. The airplane performed demonstration flights and was on static display in Berlin, Germany; Seville, Madrid and Palma, Spain; Athens, Santorini, Mikonos and Thessaloniki, Greece; Bergamo and Rome, Italy; and London and East Midlands, England.

On its return to the U.S., the 717 made a stop in St. Louis where TWA executives and employees at the airline's headquarters had an opportunity to view the airplane up close. TWA has 50 firm orders and options for 50 more, and will receive its first 717 in February 2000.

Airline guests, aviation industry and government officials were briefed on the 717's features and performance characteristics during flight demonstrations and ground displays in each of the cities on the tour. Guests explored the cabin's wide seats and aisle, the large overhead stowage bins, and the full-grip, illuminated handrails. The cockpit, featuring the 717's modern flight deck with its six-across liquid crystal displays, also was open for public view.

The airplane, painted in the Boeing red, white and blue livery, now will be repainted in the colors of AirTran Airways, launch customer of the 717, prior to delivery to the airline later this year. Airlines in the United States and Europe have placed 115 firm orders and 110 options for the Boeing 717.

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