Boeing Delivers First 717-200 Jetliner To AirTran Airways

The Boeing Company today delivered its first 717-200, the world's newest 100-seat passenger jet, to launch customer AirTran Airways.

The 717-200, assembled at the Boeing Long Beach Division, was launched in 1995 as the MD-95 and renamed after the merger of Boeing and McDonnell Douglas in 1997. AirTran has 50 firm orders and 50 options for the airplane.

AirTran, a regional carrier based in Orlando, Fla., is scheduled to take delivery of seven more 717s in 1999. Its first two airplanes enter revenue service in October. All of AirTran's 717-200s will be configured with 12 seats in business class and 105 seats in coach.

"We are proud to be the launch customer for this airplane, and are confident passengers will enjoy the innovative features that make travel on the 717 the ultimate flying experience," said Joe Leonard, chairman and chief executive officer of AirTran.

On Sept. 1, 1999, the 717-200 received joint certification from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and Europe's Joint Aviation Authorities. It is the first commercial airplane to have been awarded a single basis for type certification.

"The 717-200 is ready to enter passenger service, and we are pleased to deliver the first airplane to AirTran," said Alan Mulally, president of Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group. "The 717 is the perfect airplane for the 100-seat airplane market. We are excited about the value that this newest member of the Boeing family will bring to our customers and the flying public."

Jim Phillips, vice president and general manager of the Long Beach Division expressed similar sentiments.

"This is a great day," Phillips said. "Today we complete a journey that began more than four years ago, and we begin a new journey expected to take more than 20 years."

The 717-200 completed a successful year-long flight-test and certification program in August this year. Five test airplanes accumulated more than 2,000 hours and over 1,900 flights. The program achieved great technical results, including better fuel efficiency, lower airplane noise and lower weight than original estimates.

Boeing and 16 international supplier-partners joined worked together to develop and produce the 717-200, as a simple, low-cost, low-risk airplane designed specifically for the quick-turnaround, high-frequency, short-range market of up to 1,500 nautical miles.

The airplane will meet the demands of airline customers and passengers in the 21st century. Two advanced BMW/Rolls-Royce 715 engines power the 717-200, producing the quietest airplane in its class. Pilots will appreciate the airplane's modern two-crew flight deck, and passengers will like its comfortable cabin interior with five-abreast seating. The typical 717-200 has 106 seats in a two-class arrangement and the largest stowbins for single-aisle airplanes.

Customers in the United States and Europe have placed a total of 115 firm orders and 110 options for the 717-200. Boeing also will deliver airplanes this year to Bavaria International Aircraft Leasing Co., slated for operations in Europe.

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