Boeing Awarded Contract To Upgrade E-6 Cockpit

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] has been awarded a contract by the U.S. Navy's Naval Air Systems Command to modernize the cockpits of its fleet of 16 E-6 aircraft. The contract, including all options, is worth $123 million.

Under the Multi-function Display System (MDS) contract, Boeing will adapt its Next Generation 737-700 cockpit and avionics architecture to the E-6 fleet as a cost-effective means of achieving compliance with Global Air Traffic Management (GATM) requirements. This will provide the Navy continued access to preferred airspace as International Civil Aviation Organization guidelines are implemented around the world.

The MDS will replace more than 100 aging cockpit instruments with six flat-panel displays and dual flight management systems. Use of this commercial-off-the-shelf technology will dramatically improve long-term support of the fleet.

Chuck Moss, Boeing E-6 program manager, said, "This effort not only is an effective application of commercial investments to lower support costs, but also it meets the emerging GATM requirements, which the Navy needs for accomplishing the worldwide E-6 mission."

Other industry team members playing major roles in the program include Honeywell Defense Avionics Systems and Smiths Industries Defense Systems North America.

The modernization work primarily will be done in Seattle and Wichita, Kan., and will be completed in 2004.

The E-6, which provides a vital communications link between national command authorities and U.S. strategic nuclear forces, is a modified 707-320B aircraft. Boeing delivered 16 E-6 airplanes to the U.S. Navy from 1989 to 1992.

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