Boeing Completes Last Classic 737 Fuselage

The Boeing Company today marked the completion of its last Classic 737 fuselage with a ceremony attended by several hundred employees and retirees who worked on the program during the last 34 years.

"Today is a historic day as we pause to honor and thank Boeing workers for their contributions in building the all-time, best-selling commercial airplane," said Jeff Turner, Boeing Wichita vice president and general manager.

"While we reflect on the passage into history of a truly great airplane, we also look ahead to the Next-Generation family of airplanes - the Classic 737's successor - as it takes us into the next century of flight and sets new records of performance, reliability and popularity," he said.

Designed to replace the Boeing 727, the first 737 airplane, a 737-100, was delivered to Lufthansa on Dec. 28, 1967.

The fuselage sections being rolled out today are for a 737-400 airplane model. The airplane will be delivered to Czech Airways in February 2000.

Boeing Wichita's involvement in the 737 Program dates back to 1965, when workers began building portions of the airplane's tail. Wichita's role gradually expanded to production of the fuselage of the Classic and Next-Generation 737 airplanes.

Today, Boeing Wichita supplies engine struts and nacelles, vertical fin and horizontal stabilizer, inboard and outboard flaps, and front and rear wing spars for the Next-Generation 737 family of airplanes.

There are about 357,000 parts held together by about 600,000 bolts and rivets in the 737-300/-400/-500 models. For the 1,986 Boeing 737-300/-400/-500 airplane models produced, this equals about 1,191,600,000 bolts and rivets.

The Classic 737 fuselage rolled out today will be sent by rail to the company's Renton, Wash., factory, where the fuselage sections will be joined in final assembly. In contrast, Next-Generation fuselage sections are joined in Wichita into a single piece prior to shipping.

Boeing Wichita estimates that over the life of the Classic 737 Program, more than 50,000 employees have been involved in producing the airplanes. Currently there are about 2,500 people assigned to the Next-Generation 737 Program in Wichita. The Next-Generation family of airplanes includes the 737-600/-700/-800/-900 and Boeing Business Jet.

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