Boeing 747 Gets Its Own Postage Stamp

World's Biggest Jetliner Now Has World's Biggest Stamp

The only airplane with a name that's a household word - the Boeing 747 - has added yet another award to an already crowded trophy case: its own postage stamp.

In an employee celebration in the Everett factory where the world's fastest subsonic jetliner is built, the U.S. Postal Service today unveiled the new 33-cent "Jumbo Jet" postage stamp, which goes on sale Thursday at post offices nationwide.

"Being honored with a stamp is especially meaningful because our 747 is included with two other very significant events in aviation history also receiving stamps - the Wright brothers first flight in 1903 and Charles Lindbergh's crossing of the Atlantic," said Phil Condit, Boeing chairman and chief executive officer. "I think that's pretty good company."

Over a two-year period, millions of Americans cast ballots as part of the "Celebrate The Century" stamp program to decide the most notable events, people and trends of the 20th century. They singled out the 747 as one of the most significant technological achievements of the 20th century.

"Today we honor the development of the world's largest commercial airplane, the 747, by placing its image on one of the world's smallest communication vehicles - a postage stamp," said Ray Conner, 747 Program vice president and general manager. "These two very powerful instruments help bring people and their ideas together all over the world."

The 747-100 revolutionized intercontinental air travel in the 1970s with its unmatched combination of size and range. The result: the lowest operating costs in the industry, making the 747 a favorite of airlines and passengers alike.

The 747 Jumbo Jet stamp commemorates a major leap forward in aviation, observed U.S. Postmaster General William Henderson.

"And today, the latest versions of these jets continue to be manufactured with innovations both in technology and passenger comfort," Henderson said.

Today's high-technology 747-400 is 90 percent new compared to the original 747, resulting in improved aerodynamics, digital avionics, a new flight deck, the latest in-flight entertainment systems, more passengers and 3,000 miles more range - a 57 percent increase. Of the 1,100 747s in service today, more than 500 are 747-400s.

Not only has the airplane been continually modernized, so have the techniques used to build it. Over the past five years, Boeing has digitized original engineering drawings for the huge fuselage and installed new tooling to improve manufacturing quality and reduce assembly time. Today's stamp unveiling took place in front of the 1,236th 747 to be built, and the first built using the new fuselage assembly process.

The digitized drawings and new tooling are tangible symbols of the Boeing commitment to the future of the 747. And, they will enable Boeing to quickly bring to market future 747 derivatives with longer range and higher passenger capacity - when customers demand them.

"We have delivered more than 1,230 747s and I expect we'll deliver 1,200 more," said Boeing Commercial Airplanes president Alan Mulally, noting the 747's central role in the Boeing airplane family. "Boeing airplanes change the world, bringing people, ideas and opportunity together, increasing global understanding and prosperity. The 747 is at the heart of this legacy."

Students in 300,000 classrooms nationwide will be learning about that legacy as part of a Celebrate The Century curriculum. Some children already have impressions about the Queen of the Skies.

"I think the 747 is the most cool airplane ever," 12-year-old Anastasiya Mishkov, told thousands of Boeing employees gathered for the unveiling. Dressed to look like the girl on the Jumbo Jet stamp, Mishkov had the honor of unveiling the stamp image at today's celebration.

After the stamp made its debut, Boeing had an unveiling of its own, as employees gazed at a 70-foot-square image of the Jumbo Jet stamp, permanently affixed to the doors of the huge factory. It's the world's biggest stamp, on the world's largest building, in which the world's largest commercial airplane is built.

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