Boeing Rolls Out The Last Classic 737

Boeing today rolled the last Classic 737 -- a 737-400 jetliner -- off its Renton plant assembly line, completing a record production run of 1,988 airplanes.

Thousands of Boeing employees gathered to celebrate the great success of the "Classic" 737 series (which includes the 737-400, 737-400 and 737-500 models) and the transition to the Next-Generation 737 family of airplanes.

"The 737 is one of the greatest success stories of The Boeing Company," said Phil Condit, Boeing chairman and chief executive officer. Condit was vice president and general manager of the Renton plant in 1984, when production of the Classic 737-300 began.

"Early on, we had serious concerns about the long-term viability of the program, but Boeing kept improving the airplane and the program really took off," Condit recalled. "Today, as we say goodbye to the Classic 737, we see a much different picture. The Next-Generation 737, which builds on the success of the Classic 737s, is the fastest-selling airplane family in commercial aviation history and will continue to play a major role in the future of Boeing."

Alan Mulally, Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group president, also addressed employees attending the celebration.

"The Renton team had a phenomenal year in 1999," he said.

Mulally noted that during a year in which Boeing delivered a record number of airplanes, Renton employees produced an industry record of 32 jetliners a month.

"This is an outstanding accomplishment!" he added.

The airplane rolled out today is actually the 3,132nd Boeing 737 in the "first generation" and Classic series. That total includes 30 737-100s, 1,114 737-200s, 1,113 737-300s, 486 737-400s and 389 737-500s.

Assembly of the first two 737 models, the 737-100 and 737-200, began in 1967. The first 737-300 rolled out of the factory Jan. 17, 1984. The launch customers were USAir (now US Airways) and Southwest Airlines.

The first 737-400 rolled out of the factory Jan. 26, 1988, with Piedmont Airlines as the launch customer. (Piedmont later became part of USAir.) Southwest Airlines also was the launch customer for the 737-500, which rolled out Feb. 28, 1990.

In all, customers have announced orders for over 4,300 737s of all types.

With the last Classic 737 on its way, 737 factory workers now will concentrate on building the Next-Generation 737, which is being assembled at the rate of 24 per month, a record for commercial jetliner production. The previous record was in 1991 when production for the Classic 737 reached 21 airplanes per month.

The Next-Generation 737 family consists of the 737-600, 737-700, 737-800, 737-900 and Boeing Business Jet.

The newest 737 models were launched in 1993. The Next-Generation 737 series is the newest in its class. Changes from current production 737s include new and larger wings, higher cruise speed, more range, and new engines with improvements in noise, fuel burn and thrust. These improvements allow the Next-Generation 737 family members to fly higher, faster and farther than previous 737s. The new 737 models also enjoy crew commonality with the Classic 737s.

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