737-900 Panel Join Begins

Workers at Boeing Wichita this month began joining body panels that make up portions of the lower lobe of the forward fuselage of the first 737-900. The assemblies, shown here, were loaded on the Multi-Task Gantry Riveting System for joining of the skins and installation of the cargo door surround structure. Wichita builds three-quarters of the Next-Generation airframe and ships the one-piece fuselages to the company's Renton, Wash., factory for final assembly and delivery. Launched by Alaska Airlines in 1997 with an order for 10 airplanes, the 737-900 measures 138 feet and 2 inches in length and is the longest Next-Generation 737 in production. It is designed to carry 177 passengers in mixed-class configuration distances of up to 3,140 miles.

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