Boeing Next-Generation 737-900 Design Nears Completion

Boeing engineers have released more than 90 percent of the design drawings necessary to build the new Boeing Next-Generation 737-900. The achievement marks a key milestone in the design of the latest Boeing single-aisle airplane.

"This is a definitive milestone for us," said Jack Gucker, vice president of 737/757 Derivative Programs. "We are wrapping up the development phase of this airplane program right on schedule and moving toward on-time delivery of the first 737-900 in April 2001."

With most engineering drawings complete, parts for the airplane are being manufactured and delivered by suppliers worldwide. Employees at the Boeing plant in Wichita, Kan., have completed assembly of the 133 foot 5 inch (40.7 meter) fuselage of the first 737-900. The first wings are being built at the Boeing factory in Renton, Wash.

The 737-900 is nearly nine feet (2.7 meters) longer than the Next-Generation 737-800, the largest model in the Boeing Next-Generation 737 family. The 737-900 will carry up to 177 passengers in a two-class configuration, 15 more passengers than the 737-800. It accommodates up to 189 passengers in a one-class layout.

Because of this higher capacity, the new 737-900 will offer the lowest seat-mile operating costs in the Next-Generation 737 family. With its newer and more advanced design, the 737-900 will have a nearly 9 percent lower seat-mile cost than the similar sized Airbus Industrie A321-200. This will allow 737-900 operators the flexibility to offer lower fares and operate more profitably than competitors with the older Airbus product. Seat-mile cost is the standard measure used to calculate the cost of transporting one airplane seat one mile.

The 737-900 uses the same wing and the same engine as the 737-600, 737-700 and 737-800 models. All four models are powered by CFM56-7 engines produced by CFMI, a joint venture of General Electric Co. of the U.S. and Snecma of France.

The airplane will be able to cruise at a maximum altitude of 41,000 feet (12,497 meters), compared to 39,000 feet (11,887 meters) for Airbus Industrie's A320. For passengers, this can mean a smoother ride. For airlines, it means being able to fly above bad weather, congested routes, and less capable airplanes.

The first 737-900, which was ordered by Alaska Airlines, is due to leave the Renton factory in July. Continental Airlines, Korean Air Lines and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines also have ordered the model. The total of orders for the model is 45.

With 1,453 orders from 109 customers, the Next-Generation 737 programs is the fastest selling airplane family in commercial aviation history.

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