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The Boeing Company today congratulated South African Airways for taking delivery of three Boeing Next-Generation 737s. These are the first of 21 new 737s the airline has ordered to upgrade its fleet.

GATX Flightlease Management GmbH Company will finance some of the airplanes. Including a combination of purchased and leased airplanes this order previously has been listed under "unidentified customers" in Boeing cumulative order totals.

"The advanced performance and economics of the Next-Generation 737-800s with winglets will help serve our West African destinations," said Coleman Andrews, SAA chief executive and president. "The 737s are a superior performer, flying farther and more economically than competing models."

Some of SAA's 737s will be retrofitted with advanced-technology winglets in the Spring of 2001.

Boeing announced the winglets as an option on the Next-Generation 737-800 earlier this year. With the new winglets, the Next-Generation 737-800 achieves better fuel economy and longer range than competing aircraft.

"South African Airways decision to purchase the Next-Generation 737-800 to expand its business, indicates the unmatched performance our customers are experiencing with the 737 over the A320," said Seddik Belyamani, executive vice president, Sales and Marketing, Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group.

While the Next-Generation 737s are the newest, most advanced design airplanes in their market segment today, they retain the reliability and economy that made 737 Classics so popular worldwide. Dramatic enhancements include a new wing design for improved fuel capacity and increased aerodynamic efficiency, large displays in the flight deck and an updated passenger cabin with contoured walls and ceilings, to create a sense of spaciousness and add greater stowage capacity compared to Classic 737s.

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