Boeing And Alaska Airlines Introduce Next-Generation 737-900

The Boeing Company introduced its newest commercial jetliner, the Boeing Next-Generation 737-900, at a festive celebration held today at the company's Renton, Wash., manufacturing facility.

The 177-seat 737-900, the longest Boeing 737 model ever produced, was escorted out of the factory by three-time Iditarod sled dog race champion Doug Swingley and his team of dogs. The sled dogs are a symbol of the state of Alaska, from which launch customer Alaska Airlines takes its name.

Seattle-based Alaska Airlines launched the 737-900 program in November 1997 with an order for 10 jetliners and has ordered one additional 737-900 since then. The carrier plans to take delivery of its first 737-900 in April 2001, after a comprehensive flight-test program.

"We at Alaska Airlines are thrilled to be the launch customer for the Boeing 737-900," said John Kelly, Alaska Airlines chairman and chief executive officer, addressing thousands of Boeing and Alaska employees attending the event. "The stunning economics of this highly efficient airplane meet our future needs and goals. Our already young fleet of Boeing aircraft just got even younger.

"We are especially excited because the 737-900 will be the largest airplane in our fleet . That gives us the extra capacity we need to serve the high-density markets on our busy routes up and down the West Coast. With the extended range of our Next-Generation 737-700s and 737-900s, we'll also be able to fly to even more destinations in the future."

Three other airlines also will be flying Boeing 737-900s soon. Continental Airlines, based in Houston, Tex., has ordered 15; Korean Airlines 16; and KLM Royal Dutch Airlines four, making for a total of 46 737-900 orders. All three carriers are scheduled to take their first 737-900s in 2001.

"Our customers will be receiving the newest model in the newest, most advanced-design family in the single-aisle market - one that offers superior economics, low maintenance costs and the highest level of commonality," said Seddik Belyamani, executive vice president - Sales and Marketing, Boeing Commercial Airplanes Group. "Passengers will appreciate the all-new, more spacious interior as well as the 737's legendary high dispatch reliability that gets them to their destinations on time."

The largest model in the Next-Generation 737-600/-700/-800/-900 family, the 737-900 carries 15 more passengers in a two-class configuration than the next longest model, the 737-800.

"Our customers are going to love the dazzling economics of this airplane," said Carolyn Corvi, Boeing 737 Programs vice president and general manager. "That extra capacity helps give the 737-900 the lowest operating costs per seat and per mile of any single-aisle airplane in its class. And it's the most fuel-efficient single-aisle jetliner on the market today. That's important at a time when airlines are facing the highest fuel prices they have in years."

Like the 737-600, 737-700 and 737-800, the other three models in the Next-Generation 737 family, the 737-900 has an all-new interior with more accessible overhead luggage bins. It also has an advanced flight deck featuring the latest large flat panel display technology - one that permits customers to configure the display for maximum commonality with existing fleets.

The Next-Generation 737 family entered service in 1997 and is the fastest selling new airplane program in history. Customers have placed more than 1,600 orders for Next-Generation 737s.

The Boeing 737 family, including the Next-Generation 737s, has won orders for more than 4,700 airplanes -- more orders than The Boeing Company's biggest competitor has won for its entire product line in the 31 years since it began business.

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