Boeing Expands Roles of Key Connexion by Boeing Suppliers

Alenia Aerospazio and Mitsubishi Allied In European & Asian Operations

Boeing today revealed expanded roles in Europe and Asia for key suppliers in its revolutionary new broadband connectivity venture for airplane passengers, Connexion by Boeing[SM].

Rome-based Alenia Aerospazio, a Finmeccanica Company, and Tokyo-based Mitsubishi Electric Corp. (MELCO) will provide Boeing with management and technical support for the venture's planned network operations in Europe and Asia. Alenia will provide satellite and transponder capacity options for enabling European coverage, support the overall service rollout and perform aircraft modifications in Europe. MELCO will provide satellite and transponder capacity options for enabling Asian coverage. Both companies will provide support in the design and manufacturing of proprietary technology and infrastructure electronics for the Connexion by Boeing service.

"We have been actively engaged in ongoing discussions with Alenia and MELCO and are pleased to announce their respective roles on our program. This will strengthen the Connexion by Boeing team, as well as our ongoing relationship with two outstanding industry leaders," said Boeing Vice President and General Manager Kenneth Medlin during an announcement at the Farnborough 2000 International Air Show.

Using their Aeronavali modification and maintenance organization in Italy, Alenia will assist with the design and installation of the Connexion by Boeing equipment for airline and aircraft customers throughout Europe.

Both companies will support the design and manufacturing of the next-generation phased array antenna and the supporting electronics for the Connexion by Boeing service. The new design will improve system performance and overall capability. A proprietary technology initially developed by Boeing in 1986, the phased array antenna is a key enabler for two-way broadband communications providing a dramatic increase in data transmission capability than currently exists.

The Boeing phased array antenna provides enhanced response to directional changes by steering signals electronically vs. mechanically, permitting instantaneous and continuous connections between satellites and customer aircraft.

"Alenia and MELCO bring unique and valued understandings of the markets they serve. The capabilities provided by their people and their world-class satellite design and manufacturing facilities will enhance the overall service infrastructure and help to bring forth this exciting new mobile communications service," added Medlin in outlining the expanded roles for both companies.

Using Connexion by Boeing, In-flight airline passengers will soon be able to choose from a multitude of personalized real-time services including Internet and corporate intranet access, e-commerce, live television and entertainment, transmission and receipt of data, shopping, travel and destination information. Airline operators also will benefit from additional in-flight access to aircraft and crew data.

Connexion by Boeing is the innovative new commercial broadband data service that combines the core strengths of the world's largest aircraft manufacturer with the company's move into space-based communications. The Connexion by Boeing service will initially be available to commercial airline customers in North America with European service anticipated in 2002. Additional global regions will be added as the service matures.

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