Boeing 717 Receives High Praise after First Year of Service

Today AirTran Airways celebrated its first year of operating the Boeing 717, the world's newest single-aisle airplane designed for short-haul, high-frequency routes. The 717's performance has far exceeded AirTran's expectations in fuel efficiency, avionics systems and customer satisfaction.

"The 717 has helped us to save millions of dollars in fuel costs in its first year of service," said Joe Leonard, AirTran Airways' chairman and CEO. "We anticipated 18 percent better fuel efficiency versus the DC-9, but the 717 is actually averaging 24 percent increased efficiency. In a time of skyrocketing fuel costs, we feel very fortunate to have invested in such an efficient and technologically advanced aircraft."

Boeing delivered the first 717 to launch customer AirTran on Sept. 24, 1999. AirTran entered the plane into service on Oct. 12 on its Atlanta-Washington, D.C., route.

AirTran placed an order for 50 717s in 1995. The purchase took place two years after the company was founded, making AirTran the youngest airline in history to be the launch customer for a new airplane. Thirteen 717s are in revenue service with AirTran today, with the balance scheduled for delivery through 2003.

"One of the best indicators of the success of this new aircraft, and the positive image it lends AirTran Airways, is the excellent feedback we've received from our passengers," Leonard said. "From the spacious interior to our large EasyFit carry-on storage bins, our passengers have noticed the difference."

The 717 is designed specifically for efficient short-hop service, short-field operations and fast turnaround at airport gates. It can sustain eight to 12 one-hour flights every day, day after day. The airplane can easily serve routes in the short-haul regional market.

"We are pleased to share this first anniversary of Boeing 717 service with AirTran Airways," said Jim Phillips, Boeing vice president-general manager, Long Beach Division and 717 Program. "We have continued to work closely with AirTran during this first year to ensure we have indeed created the most advanced and fuel efficient airplane for AirTran and all of its customers."

The Boeing 717 is positioned in the heart of the 90- to 110-seat regional market, which is projected to require 3,000 airplanes over the next 20 years.

###

For further information:
Warren Lamb
office: 562-593-3269
Mike Tull
office: 206-766-2910