American Airlines Takes Delivery Of Boeing 777 Purchased By Its Employees

Two hundred and sixty American Airlines employees and guests flew off today in a new Boeing 777, an airplane those employees helped to purchase with cost savings resulting from their innovative ideas.

The new Boeing 777, with a list price of $150 million, was branded "American Spirit, IdeAAs In Flight," in honor of American Airlines' IdeAAs Employee Solutions Program.

"The IdeAAs program illustrates the power of employee ideas and recognizes those employees by rewarding them for their solutions," said Bob Stoltz, managing director of IdeAAs. "There's no better way to strengthen our company than by going to the people who do the job every day."

Every American Airlines employee can participate in the IdeAAs program by submitting suggestions to reduce cost or improve revenue. Participating employees are rewarded with eight to 10 percent of the savings, up to $25,000 per idea.

Today's 777 flight, bound first for Tulsa, Okla., and then later for Dallas/Fort Worth, capped two days of celebrations in Seattle for the American Airlines employees and guests. Many of the employees on the flight helped American to save more than $15 million. Their innovative ideas ranged from scheduling improvements that shorten flight times between airports, to reconfiguring flap settings on specific aircraft, to using a single coffee pot brewer per day on each airplane instead of replacing them at each destination.

This is the second Boeing airplane that American has purchased with savings from its IdeAAs program. The first was a 757-200, purchased in 1992. Since its inception in 1987, the IdeAAs program has saved more than $590 million for American. The current campaign, which has been under way since 1997, has resulted in more than $150 million in savings.

The 777 delivered today brings American's existing fleet of 777s to 28. The airline has another 19 777s on order, with the next scheduled for delivery in February.

The 777 is the most advanced, comfortable and economic jetliner in its class. The airplane has a 99.1 percent schedule reliability rate and has won numerous accolades and praise for its new approach to passenger comfort, crew workload and reliability. In fact, recent independent passenger preference polls have found that three out of four passengers prefer the Boeing 777 for long-haul flights.

"It is fitting that American Airlines has chosen a 777 to honor its employees' innovativeness," said Ron Ostrowski, vice president and general manager of the 777 program. "This airplane is a testament to the working together philosophy where ingenuity and inventiveness of everyone involved, including our customers, created a superior product that continues to deliver for airlines worldwide."

The "American Spirit" airplane delivered today is a 777-200ER (Extended Range) model. The 777-200ER is the longest-range jetliner in the world, flying up to 8,860 statute miles (7,700 nautical miles). The 777-200ER can accommodate from 305 to 328 passengers in a typical three-class configuration -- the same as the 777-200 initial model. The 777-200ER carries an additional 45,200 gallons of fuel to allow for its longer range over the initial model.

The 777 is the fastest selling twin-aisle airplane ever, with the year 2000 being a record year for the most 777s sold -- 117 airplanes -- in a single year. The 777 family of airplanes has captured 69 percent of its market, with more than 30 customers worldwide having ordered 563 airplanes. The 777 worldwide fleet consists of 320 airplanes.

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