First Boeing 757 Special Freighter Makes First Flight

The first Boeing 757 Special Freighter (SF) lifted off Thursday for its first flight since undergoing passenger-to-freighter modification at Boeing Airplanes Services' Wichita facility.

The 757-200SF, piloted by Boeing Capt. Gerald Whites, covered much of the Kansas countryside during the three-hour flight. The airplane is to be delivered in early March to launch customer DHL Worldwide Express.

"This is a thrilling day for the entire program," said Glaine Russell, director of 757SF and 767SF programs, Boeing Airplane Services. "The airplane looked beautiful and had a fabulous maiden flight. Our employees have worked extremely hard on this airplane, and we are all so proud to see it fly today."

During today's flight the crew performed engine, system, instrument and flight control tests. After successfully demonstrating its performance, the 757SF will operate under Boeing's Supplemental Type Certificate issued by the Federal Aviation Administration.

The airplane is the first of 44 airplanes Boeing Airplane Services is purchasing, converting and providing to DHL under a multi-year arrangement as part of a total fleet management solution.

"The first flight is an extremely important milestone for this extremely important program," said Bob Avery, president of Boeing Airplane Services. "The DHL program truly demonstrates the type of tailored solution that we can provide our customers."

The 757SF modification involved the removal of the passenger furnishings, installation of a side cargo door, replacement of selected floor panels to strengthen the main deck floor, and installation of a cargo handling system. The 757SF will be capable of carrying 60,000 pounds (27,210 kg) of cargo more than 2,000 nautical miles with a volume payload capacity of more than 8,000 cubic feet (226.535 cubic meters).

Boeing Airplane Services provides customer-focused service solutions designed to meet an airline's individual requirements. Offerings include engineering retrofit packages, avionics upgrades, in-flight entertainment systems integration, cabin management solutions, passenger-to-freighter conversions, recovery and repair services and performance improvements for Boeing commercial airplanes.

Boeing Airplane Services is a unit of the Boeing Commercial Aviation Services organization, and as part of The Boeing Company, has access to all the experience and technical capabilities of the world's largest aerospace company. More than 11,000 Boeing airplanes are in operation today around the world.

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For further information:
Fred Solis
(316) 526-3153
Anne DeAngelis
(425) 865-7111