Design Milestone Reached for Boeing Longer-Range 747-400

Boeing engineers have brought passengers one step closer to more comfortable longer-range flight with the completion of 25 percent of all structural engineering releases for the new Longer-Range 747-400 passenger airplane. Completion of these engineering releases allows Boeing factories and suppliers to begin fabricating tooling and airplane parts assemblies.

"This milestone is yet another sign that we're on schedule and the airplane is on its way to becoming a physical reality," said Jeff Peace, 747-400 program manager. "Our team has made tremendous progress in the three months since we formally launched the program."

The Longer-Range 747-400 is the same size as today's 747-400 but allows airlines to choose to fly longer routes or carry more cargo or passengers on existing routes. Blending the latest in passenger amenities found in the Boeing 777 with exceptional performance to support long-range, non-stop, high-demand routes, the Longer-Range 747-400 has a maximum takeoff weight of 910,000 pounds (412,770 kilograms).

The basic 747-400 airplane, with a maximum takeoff weight of 875,000 pounds (396,900 kilograms), will continue to be offered in passenger, freighter and combi versions.

With a takeoff weight increase of 35,000 pounds (15,870 kilograms) over existing 747-400s, the Longer-Range 747-400 can fly an additional 435 nautical miles (805 kilometers). Or, it can carry an additional 15,000 pounds (6,800 kilograms) of payload, either in the form of extra cargo or a full load of 416 passengers.

"The 747-400 is the most prestigious and recognized airplane in the world, and the Longer-Range version is the next logical step in this airplane's evolution," Peace said. "With its new interior and additional payload/range capability, the Longer-Range 747-400 represents even more value for our customers on their long-range routes."

An auxiliary tank in the airplane's lower lobe provides fuel for the airplane's additional range capability; an optional second tank is available. Using both auxiliary tanks and fuel in the horizontal stabilizer, the Longer-Range 747-400 will be able to carry up to 63,765 gallons (241,370 liters) of fuel. To support the gross weight increase, the airplane has strengthened parts of its wing, fuselage, and landing gear, which includes new tires and wheels.

In addition to its enhanced payload and range capabilities, the Longer-Range 747-400 passenger airplane also incorporates a new 777-style interior, similar to the one passengers will enjoy on the 747X family of airplanes.

"In addition to reaching our 25 percent release milestone, we also recently reached firm configuration of our interior," Peace said. "It looks a lot like a 777 interior and feels even more spacious because of the 747's unique, 20-foot-wide cross section. Passengers are going to be pleasantly surprised."

Boeing launched the Longer-Range 747-400 program Nov. 28, 2000, with an order for six airplanes from Qantas Airways. The first airplane is scheduled to roll out of the factory in May 2002. After a four-month flight-test program that culminates in certification, the first Longer-Range 747-400 will be delivered to Qantas in November 2002.

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