Southwest Becomes First Airline to Operate 100 Boeing Next-Generation 737-700s

The Boeing Company announced today that Next-Generation 737-700 launch customer Southwest Airlines took delivery of its 100th 737-700 on March 30. The milestone comes three years and three months after Boeing delivered the first Next-Generation 737-700 to Southwest in December 1997.

Southwest operates the largest fleet of 737 airplanes in the world.

"Adding to our fleet of Boeing 737-700s has enabled us to continue to grow into new markets, serve more customers, and bring our brand of affordable air service to more people than ever before," said Jim Wimberly, Southwest Airlines executive vice president and chief of operations. "This is a significant day in the history of Southwest Airlines."

This newest airplane is one of 25 737-700s Boeing will deliver to Southwest this year. Another 27 airplanes are scheduled for delivery in 2002, and 26 more in 2003. Southwest has orders with Boeing up to the year 2012.

"Southwest helped to define this airplane, and I can't think of anything more fitting than Southwest being the first airline to take delivery of and operate 100 737-700s," said Carolyn Corvi, Boeing vice president and general manager of the 737 program. "When the Next-Generation 737 program was launched, a key objective was to design airplanes that incorporated advanced technology but would allow for simplicity, reliability and low cost of operation. The 737-700 does all that and more for Southwest, and the airline is able to turn the value it derives into a winning formula for customers, shareholders, and its own employees."

At 110 feet four inches long, the 737-700 as configured by Southwest Airlines can seat 137 passengers in a single-class configuration. The airplane flies 3,260 nautical miles (6,038 kilometers).

All models of the Next-Generation 737 family incorporate a new, advanced-technology wing design that helps increase and improve fuel capacity and efficiency, both of which increase range. The airplanes are powered by CFM56-7 engines produced by CFMI, a joint venture of General Electric Co. and Snecma of France.

Southwest Airlines, the fourth-largest domestic carrier in terms of customers boarded, currently serves 58 airports in 57 cities in 29 states. Based in Dallas, Southwest operates more than 2,750 flights a day with a fleet of 352 Boeing 737s with an average age of 8.2 years - one of the youngest jet fleets in the domestic airline industry.

The Next-Generation 737 is the newest, most advanced jetliner in its class, and is the fastest selling new commercial jetliner in history. Since the program's launch in 1993, the airplane has logged nearly 1,800 orders.

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