Midwest Express To Order Boeing 717-200 Airplanes

The Boeing Company confirmed today that Midwest Express Airlines, recently ranked the No. 1 Domestic Airline by the 2001 Zagat Airline Survey, has selected the 717 for its fleet modernization program. Midwest Express has signed a memo of understanding to order up to 50 Boeing 717-200 airplanes.

Once a firm contract is signed, it will consist of a firm order for 20 717 airplanes, with options for an additional 30. The value of the firm order will be $750 million, with deliveries scheduled to begin in February 2003, continuing into 2006.

Midwest Express, based in Milwaukee, Wis., initiated revenue service in 1984 and currently operates a fleet of 34 airplanes in scheduled service, including 24 DC-9s and 10 MD-80 aircraft. In 2000, Midwest Express carried 2.1 million passengers. The airline will use the new 717s to expand capacity on existing routes, to launch new service to cities not currently served, and eventually as replacements for existing DC-9s. Midwest Express will configure its new 717s with 88 seats.

"The 717 is an excellent fit for us," said Timothy Hoeksema, chairman, president and CEO of Midwest Express Airlines. "It allows us to continue to provide the product that has become our hallmark. Wide two-across leather seating is an important component of that product."

The Boeing 717-200 is the only new 100-passenger short-range jetliner in revenue service today and makes effective use of the latest technology, resulting in low operating costs. The 717 produces the lowest noise and emissions, offering big-jet passenger comfort and breakthrough simplicity in design. Two advanced Rolls-Royce engines power the 717, making it the quietest airplane in its class.

In comparison to Midwest Express' current fleet of DC-9s, the 717 will provide 25 percent better fuel consumption and a similar level of savings in maintenance.

"Boeing is delighted and honored that Midwest Express has the confidence to select the 717 for its fleet modernization program," said Seddik Belyamani, Boeing executive vice president - Sales. "The 717 will improve the profitability of Midwest Express in the future as the airline expands capacity on existing routes and opens new routes. As other major U.S. carriers see how well the 717 airplane works for Midwest, we believe they too will want to add the airplane to their fleets. Working together with Midwest is going to be exciting, and we are thrilled by this decision."

Since taking to the skies in 1984, Midwest Express Airlines has earned its reputation for providing "the best care in the air" by offering passengers premium service at competitive coach or discounted fares. The airline is known for giving passengers personal attention, two-across, wide leather seats, fine food served on china with complimentary wine or champagne, and baked-onboard chocolate chip cookies on luncheon flights.

This unique combination of impeccable, personal service at competitive prices has brought recognition to the Milwaukee-based airline. In March 2001, Midwest Express was named the No. 1 Domestic Airline in the prestigious 2001 Zagat Airline Survey; the airline also ranked No. 1 in the last Zagat survey in 1998. In 2000, Conde Nast Traveler magazine rated Midwest Express as the "No. 1 U.S. Airline" for the sixth year in a row, and Travel+Leisure magazine named Midwest Express the "Best Domestic Airline" for the third time in four years.

Midwest Express Airlines, which caters mostly to business travelers, features primarily nonstop service to major destinations throughout the United States. Astral Aviation, Inc. - its wholly owned subsidiary - operates Skyway Airlines, The Midwest Express Connection, which offers connections to Midwest Express as well as point-to-point service between select markets. Together, the airlines fly to 49 cities.

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