Boeing Unveils New Concepts For Air Traffic Management

Plan to Increase Capacity, Reduce Delays and Enhance Safety

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] today announced its proposal to bring fundamental change to an air traffic system that frequently is overwhelmed by sheer numbers of flights and weather disruptions.

As summer approaches, increased air travel and convective weather once again could create the unsettling scene of tired, stranded passengers waiting to catch a flight out of airports across the country.

"The future of our core business - building and selling jetliners - is tied to the future of the air traffic system," said John Hayhurst, Boeing senior vice president and president of Air Traffic Management. "So we have a vested interest. But more importantly, we believe there's an achievable solution to this crisis that provides greater safety, capacity and affordability, plus fewer delays."

Boeing concepts will integrate air traffic management tasks throughout the U.S. National Airspace System. For the first time:

- All participants will have access to the same data for improved collaboration, negotiation and strategic planning.
- An extremely precise depiction of aircraft location and a prediction of its future position will enable more efficient operations.
- Air traffic controllers will have powerful tools and significantly better data to safely manage more traffic in larger sectors.

Advanced satellites providing communications, navigation and surveillance services will enable the largest improvements to the air traffic system.

The U.S. Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) has been improving the current system of radars, computers and runways. The Boeing concepts build on the FAA's plan, focusing on far-reaching change for significant capacity gains.

Once fully implemented, this new system -- combined with FAA modernization plans -- will create capacity for more than 15 years of traffic growth. The improvement is equivalent to a 45 percent cut in delays. If new runways and improved airport infrastructure are added to what is already planned, the envisioned system will accommodate air traffic growth for the next 25 years, with no increase in delays.

Boeing and the FAA are moving forward in a unique working relationship to bring stakeholders together to make real improvements soon. The company is continuing to share its proposal with the many stakeholders - passenger and cargo operators, airports, pilots, controllers, general aviation users, business jet operators and the military.

"Our next steps involve working together with this diverse group to take a more detailed look at what the system requires, evaluating the trade-offs and validating the concepts that will work," Hayhurst said. "Also, recognizing that meeting this challenge will require some of the best minds inside and outside of Boeing, we envision working closely with other companies."

Southwest Airlines Board Chairman Herb Kelleher said he was very enthused about the prospects of improving the current air-traffic system.

"I was very excited when I read about Boeing's proposal to color outside the lines, think outside the box," Kelleher said. "We have great hopes and expectations that this effort will produce tremendous results within a far shorter period than would otherwise be the case."

Boeing established its Air Traffic Management business unit in November 2000 to develop a revolutionary approach to managing air traffic. The organization has pulled leaders from the Boeing Joint Strike Fighter and Space Shuttle programs and from Boeing Commercial Airplanes sales and marketing. It also consists of experts in airport and runway design, air traffic control, avionics system performance and safety analysis, and airspace procedures and routing. It also includes an organization within Boeing that has been working air traffic issues with governments and private industry for more than two decades.

Resources Boeing can dedicate to this effort include several recent acquisitions. Through the purchase of Hughes' space and communications businesses (now Boeing Satellite Services), Boeing has become a major business leader in satellite communications. The company also recently acquired Jeppesen, the premier aeronautical charting company, and The Preston Group, the world's leading airspace modeling company.

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