Boeing Announces New Concepts For Air Traffic Management

Plan will increase capacity, reduce delays and enhance safety

The Boeing Company today introduced its proposal to bring fundamental change to air traffic systems that increasingly are overwhelmed by sheer numbers of flights and weather disruptions.

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

"The future of our core business - building and selling jetliners - is tied to the future of air traffic systems," 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 that provides greater safety, capacity and affordability, plus fewer delays."

The Boeing proposal initially focuses on the U.S. air traffic system but will incorporate requirements for global applications. The concept features "trajectories," offering the ability to locate aircraft and predict where they will be with much higher precision and further into the future than ever before. This capability will be enhanced by an advanced system of satellites that for the first time integrates communications, navigation and surveillance or tracking data. The satellite system will augment existing Global Positioning System satellites and will enable the largest improvements to the air traffic system.

Hayhurst said the Boeing Air Traffic Management concept would benefit systems in Europe as well.

"Extremely precise trajectory data could help air traffic controllers manage with much greater efficiency the congested airspace near busy airports, such as Charles de Gaulle, Frankfurt or Heathrow," Hayhurst said. "There's no question that Europe's 33-plus air traffic systems present a different set of challenges, but the requirements for increased capacity, enhanced safety and fewer delays are the same as those of the United States."

The Boeing concept will allow all air traffic system participants to have access to the same data, improving collaboration, negotiation and strategic planning. Air traffic controllers will have powerful tools and significantly better data to safely manage more traffic in larger sectors.

In the United States, the Boeing concept could be implemented in coordination with the Federal Aviation Administration's modernization plans to create capacity for more than 15 years of traffic growth. This 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.

"Our next steps involve working together with a diverse group of stakeholders, including some key European organizations, to take a more detailed look at what the envisioned system requires, evaluating the tradeoffs 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."

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 includes an organization within Boeing that has been working air traffic issues with governments and private industry for more than two decades as well.

Resources Boeing can dedicate to this effort include several recent acquisitions. Through the purchase of Hughes space and communications businesses (now Boeing Satellite Systems), 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.

Detailed concepts and additional information are on the Web site atwww.boeing.com/atm.

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