KLM First European Carrier To Fly Boeing Next-Generation 737-900

Following a celebration today at the Boeing Delivery Center in Seattle, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines became owner of its first Next-Generation 737-900, the first of four to be delivered by autumn of this year. KLM is the first European carrier to fly this newest and largest member of the Boeing 737 family.

Attending the plane-side delivery ceremony at Boeing Field were Boeing Commercial Airplanes President and CEO Alan Mulally, KLM Chief Operating Officer Peter Hartman and KLM Chief Financial Officer Rob Ruijter.

"This airplane gives us the extra capacity we need to serve our high-density European routes," Hartman said. "In addition, it allows us to offer a high-quality product at competitive prices because of its low operating costs, good reliability rate and maximum commonality with our 737-800 and 737-300/ -400 airplanes."

The 737-900, powered by CFM56-7 engines, is the longest of the Next-Generation 737s and is designed to accommodate up to 18 more passengers than the 737-800. KLM will operate its 737-900s with a 178-seat dual-class interior, featuring a five-abreast business class.

KLM is the fourth largest airline in Europe and the only major carrier that operates an all-Boeing fleet. Based in Amsterdam, The Netherlands, KLM has been a Boeing customer since December 1933.

"It's great to see KLM coming back to the 737 again and again. It's a testament to the strength of our long business partnership, the quality of this product and our constant effort to provide KLM with best value solutions," Mulally said.

Like the other three models in the Next-Generation 737 family - 737-600, -700 and -800 - the 737-900 has an all-new more spacious interior with larger overhead luggage bins. It also has an advanced flight deck featuring the latest large flat panel display technology - one that allows airlines to configure the display for maximum commonality with their existing737s.

"The 737-900 will be a great asset to KLM's fleet operations," said Toby Bright, Boeing vice president of Sales for Europe/Russia. "Its commonality with KLM's current fleet will increase the airline's operational flexibility while at the same time maintaining simplicity and low cost."

Building a quieter, more fuel-efficient airplane was a top priority for Boeing engineers designing the Next-Generation 737 family. The new, advanced-technology wing design helps improve fuel efficiency. The new CFM56-7 engines produced by CFMI, a joint venture of General Electric Co. of the United States and Snecma of France, meet community noise restrictions well below current Stage 3 limits and below expected Stage 4 limits. Emissions also are reduced beyond required standards.

The Next-Generation 737 family entered service in 1997 and is the fastest selling new airplane program in history. Customers have placed more than 1,800 orders for the new 737s.

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