Boeing Achieves Major Design Milestone On Project Wedgetail

Boeing [NYSE-BA] has successfully completed the preliminary design review (PDR) of the radar and identification friend or foe (IFF) systems for Australia's Project Wedgetail - the first major design milestone in the development of this state-of-the-art 737 airborne early warning & control system.

Work on the PDR was finished on schedule and within budget.

The PDR includes a general review of the radar/IFF design against the Wedgetail radar subsystem requirements established by the Commonwealth of Australia.

John Sandvig, Boeing Wedgetail program manager, said, "During the PDR, Boeing, and our teammate Northrop Grumman, evaluated the suitability of the design to the comprehensive set of radar subsystem requirements specified in our contract with the Commonwealth of Australia.

"Our team examined Northrop Grumman's initial hardware and software designs and their interfaces with the rest of the Wedgetail system. We're confident these designs satisfy the requirements and will yield a highly effective Wedgetail product for the Commonwealth and other future customers."

Air Vice Marshall Norm Gray, head of the airborne early warning program for the Royal Australian Air Force, said, "This PDR milestone is significant in the design maturity of the Wedgetail AEW&C radar system. We are very pleased with both Boeing and Northrop Grumman's progress in this area. It bodes well for the rest of the program."

The next step in the process is detailed design definition of components, parts and software to create the radar sub-system. These include structural drawings, circuit diagrams, electronics board and box layouts, and manufacturing and support plans.

The Multi-role Electronically Scanned Array (MESA) radar/IFF is the critical sensor aboard the 737 AEW&C. The electronically scanned array is designed to provide optimal performance in range, tracking and accuracy. The radar is able to track air and sea targets simultaneously and can help the operator maintain control of high-performance aircraft while continuously scanning the operational area.

Last year, Boeing signed a contract with the Commonwealth of Australia for the development and acquisition of Project Wedgetail.

A Boeing-led team, including Northrop Grumman's Electronic Sensors and Systems Sector, Boeing Australia Limited and BAE SYSTEMS Australia, will provide four 737 AEW&C systems plus options for up three additional systems. The contract also provides for ground-based support segments for flight and mission crew training, a mission support segment, software maintenance facilities and spare parts.

Boeing expects to deliver the first two aircraft to the Commonwealth in 2006.

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http://www.boeing.com/defense-space/infoelect/737AEWC/

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