Wichita Division Named to Sonic Cruiser Technology Development Team

Boeing Commercial Airplanes Wichita Division will be part of the technology development team working on advanced materials, including composites, for the proposed Sonic Cruiser.

The Sonic Cruiser is a new airliner concept unveiled by Boeing on March 29, 2001. The aircraft has a dramatic new configuration and is designed to fly at speeds of up to Mach 0.98, shortening travel times and with fuel consumption per passenger comparable to today's best performing widebody twinjets.

Boeing has already signed Alenia Aeronautica, Fuji Heavy Industries, Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Japan Aircraft Development Corp., Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Vought Aircraft Industries to the Sonic Cruiser materials technology development team.

"We looked at a lot of companies that are considered the best in the world for the types of materials we need for the Sonic Cruiser," said Jeff Luckey, director of Supplier Management for the Sonic Cruiser program. "Our Wichita division is clearly a part of that group and we are glad that they will be a part of our team."

Dennis Dietz, Wichita division leader for Sonic Cruiser, said the Wichita division team, which includes Tulsa, Okla., was honored to be selected to participate on the technology development team.

"This is the next step in a new and exciting journey," Dietz said. "The entire Wichita division team has committed its skills, experience and ingenuity toward this effort. To be a competitive partner on this program, we must strengthen our partner/supplier relationships and build regional infrastructure to continue the technology development and to support planning for the future."

The criteria for selecting members of the technology development team are very high. "Each participant has had to earn its way onto the team," Luckey said. "The Wichita division received no special consideration because they are a part of Boeing. They're part of the team because of their capabilities and skills."

The Wichita division designs and assembles fuselage structures, struts, and nacelles for every Boeing commercial jetliner except the 717. The division has operations in Wichita, Kan.; Tulsa and McAlester, Okla.; Melbourne, Ark.; and Oak Ridge, Tenn.

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For further information:
Lori Gunter
Everett
(425) 294-1722
Dick Ziegler
Wichita
(316) 526-3153
Steve Hendrickson
Tulsa
(918) 832-3352