Midwest Express Airlines Finalizes Order for 25 Boeing 717 Airplanes

Major order shows confidence in 717 and long-term value it provides carriers worldwide

The Boeing Company [NYSE: BA] announced today that it has finalized a firm order from Midwest Express Airlines for 25 Boeing 717-200 airplanes with options for an additional 25. Midwest Express, ranked the No. 1 domestic airline by the 2001 Zagat Airline Survey, announced in April of last year its intent to order 20 717s for its long-term fleet modernization program.

The estimated list value of the firm order for 25 717s is $940 million, with monthly deliveries scheduled to begin in February 2003 and continue into 2005. Total firm orders for the Boeing 717 are now 162, including this new order. The 717 has more firm orders than any other jetliner in its class, validating Boeing's December 2001 decision to commit to the airplane following a detailed economic and market evaluation.

"This order is a huge vote of confidence in the capabilities of the 717 airplane," said Toby Bright, Boeing Commercial Airplanes executive vice president -- Sales. "Finalizing this order -- in fact, increasing both the number of airplanes ordered and the rate of delivery -- shows faith that the 717 is the right airplane for Midwest Express' long-term business plans."

Midwest Express, based in Milwaukee, initiated revenue service in 1984 and currently operates a fleet of 35 airplanes, including 23 DC-9s and 12 MD-80 airplanes. In 2000, Midwest Express carried 2.1 million passengers. The airline will use its new 717s to expand capacity on existing routes, to launch new service to cities not currently served and eventually to replace existing DC-9s. The Midwest Express 717s will have 88 seats.

"Acquiring the Boeing 717 aircraft is another significant step in our efforts to enhance our brand by emphasizing our professional, attentive and comfortable product and service," said Timothy Hoeksema, chairman and chief executive officer, Midwest Express Airlines. "Speeding up delivery has many benefits because it will allow us to replace our DC-9 fleet more quickly with state-of-the-art, more fuel-efficient aircraft."

The Boeing 717-200 is the only new 100-passenger short-range jetliner in revenue service today. It makes effective use of the latest technology, resulting in low operating costs. The 717 produces the lowest noise and emissions, offering big-jet passenger comfort and breakthrough simplicity in design. Two advanced Rolls-Royce BR715 engines power the 717, making it the quietest airplane in its class.

"This is a great match: an award-winning airline choosing the best short-range, high frequency 100-passenger airplane in the world," Bright said. "The 717 is going to provide the high value to Midwest Express that it is demonstrating with other airlines around the world."

Since taking to the skies in 1984, Midwest Express Airlines has earned its reputation for "the best care in the air" by providing passengers premium service at competitive fares. The airline is known for offering passengers personal attention, two-across, wide leather seats, fine food served on china with complimentary wine or champagne, and baked-onboard chocolate chip cookies on select flights.

Midwest Express Airlines, which caters to business travelers, features primarily nonstop service to major destinations throughout the United States. Astral Aviation, Inc. -- its wholly owned subsidiary -- operates Skyway Airlines, The Midwest Express Connection, which offers connections to Midwest Express as well as point-to-point service between select markets. Together, the airlines fly to 50 cities.

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