

Broadband Takes Flight as Connexion by Boeing Holds Air-to-Ground Videoconference

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Connexion by Boeing achieved another historic milestone this week when it linked passengers on a jetliner 37,000 feet above Arizona by videoconference with participants at The Boeing Company's annual Investors Conference at St. Louis.

For several minutes, conference participants -- and countless others participating through a global webcast -- got a sense of the power of broadband as Connexion by Boeing President Scott Carson and System Development Director Ed Laase interacted through a live video feed, even though they were separated horizontally by 1,000 miles, vertically by seven miles and by their relative velocities: Carson stood still, while Laase sped through the Southwestern U.S. sky aboard Connexion One, a Boeing 737-400 used for research, test and demonstration.

"Broadband is taking flight," Laase said, describing an array of applications that become possible through the broadband capabilities of the Connexion by BoeingSM service. Among them:

- **An office in the sky:** Seamless, real-time communications, with the speed and quality characteristic of a modern office environment, including Internet access, audio, video, and e-mail and intranet access.
- **Improved Airline Operations:** Connexion by Boeing's unique broadband capability transforms the airplane into another node on an airline's global information network, allowing it to talk to the airline operations center, moving data simultaneously over multiple channels when they want, where they want, and moving beyond the constraints of narrowband systems currently available in the marketplace.
- **Data for critical decision-making.** Airline representatives have indicated to Connexion by Boeing that aircraft diversions for medical emergencies are costly and that costs associated with diversions are significant. With Connexion by Boeing's broadband capability, a passenger who becomes ill during flight might be examined by a medical professional on the ground, helping distinguish, for example, between a heart attack and a case of heartburn, and providing guidance to the captain as to whether a flight diversion is necessary.

"All this adds up to increased operational value for the airlines and, ultimately, for the passengers they serve," Laase added.

As the videoconference was taking place, representatives from leading airlines from four continents were participating in California with Boeing in the latest in a series of Connexion Working Together conferences to help define the service so that it meets the requirements of airlines worldwide.

Carson said the Connexion Working Together process, which involves 15 airlines, has allowed us to move forward in a way that helps create a value-added service the airlines want, and one that will enhance the passenger experience.

The Working Together sessions have covered every aspect of the Connexion by Boeing system and service, including technology, applications, service, customer care and branding.

Back in St. Louis, conference attendees were told, "What you saw was broadband at work, and that's what Connexion by Boeing is all about," said Carson. "Broadband is here. It's going to be the service of choice. And we're going to be there with the right service at the right time."

The conference was the first public demonstration of true broadband videoconferencing between an airplane

and the ground using the established Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) broadband definition of an information service with a carrying capacity in excess of 200 kilobits-per-second (kbps) both upstream and downstream. During the videoconferencing demonstration, the Connexion by Boeing service channel used operated at speeds of five megabits onto the aircraft and 256 kbps off-board. The overall service capability is 20 megabits onboard and one megabit off-board.

As conference invitees headed back to their laptops, they received a second demonstration of the power of broadband. Within minutes of the end of the videoconference, Laase sent each conference invitee a note emailed from 37,000 feet including a digital photo attachment. The historic photo was shot aboard Connexion One during the videoconference, capturing the two-way exchange.

Wednesday's videoconference was the latest in a series of recent Connexion achievements. Others include:

- Obtaining a Federal Communications Commission License for operations above U.S. territory and waters.
- Installation of the Connexion by Boeing system on the first commercial jetliner -- a Lufthansa Boeing 747-400.
- Obtaining certification from the Federal Aviation Administration for the Connexion by Boeing system aboard Boeing 737-400 jetliners.

About Connexion by Boeing

Connexion by Boeing is a mobile information services provider located in Seattle, Wash. and Irvine, Calif. The revolutionary service is currently available to the executive services market in the U.S., which includes operators of private and government aircraft. The FCC granted full authority for services over U.S. territory on Dec. 21, 2001. Connexion by Boeing also remains on track with leading European carrier Lufthansa to begin service trial in late 2002. For additional information, visit the Connexion by Boeing web site.

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