Air Astana Flies First Boeing 737-800 in the Commonwealth of Independent States

A Boeing [NYSE: BA] Next-Generation 737-800 was delivered this week to Air Astana, a Kazakhstan airline formed last year and owned jointly by the government of Kazakhstan and BAE SYSTEMS of the United Kingdom.

The airplane, the third 737 to be delivered to Astana in the past month, is the first Next-Generation 737-800 to operate in the Commonwealth of Independent States. In addition to this 737-800, Air Astana received two 737-700s that were delivered last month. All three airplanes are leased from International Lease Finance Corporation (ILFC).

Air Astana will use the airplanes on domestic routes to Almaty, Aktau, Aktobe, Atyrau and the Uralsk, and also on flights to Moscow as well as other destinations to be announced in the future.

"The 737 is the most suitable and most flexible aircraft for our route structure," said Lloyd Paxton, president of Air Astana. "In addition, we were offered excellent support packages by Boeing, which have enabled us to start operations in the shortest possible time."

The Boeing Next-Generation 737 is the newest and most technologically advanced airplane in the single-aisle airplane market. Outfitted with a new wing and more powerful engines, the new 737s can fly higher, faster and farther than previous 737 models and as well as competing airplane models.

"It is great to have a new customer like Air Astana endorse the 737," said Doug Groseclose, senior vice president, International Sales, Boeing Commercial Airplanes. "The Next-Generation 737 has the lowest maintenance and operating costs in its class. It's the perfect airplane for new airlines like Air Astana."

The Air Astana 737-800, seats 156 passengers, and the two 737-700s accommodate 114 passengers in a two-class configuration. These new airplanes feature interiors modeled after the award-winning Boeing 777.

The Next-Generation 737 flight deck has the latest liquid crystal flat panel displays and is designed to accommodate new communications and flight management capabilities. The models are powered by new CFM56-7 engines produced by CFMI, a joint venture of Snecma of France and General Electric of the United States.

ILFC, an aircraft leasing company based in Los Angeles, Calif., has the world's largest portfolio in terms of asset value. A Boeing customer since 1977, ILFC has since ordered more models of Boeing jetliners than any other customer -- a total of 650 new Boeing jetliners.
BAE SYSTEMS designs, manufactures and supports radar, communications, and electronics systems; space systems; military aircraft; surface ships; submarines; guided weapon systems and a range of other products.
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